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The North American Review

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Vol. 257/No. 4/Winter 1972

The North American Review

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ABOUT THIS ISSUE

The roots of the NAR still reach deeply into the soil of New England; from the magazine's founding in Boston 157 years ago through the present day, most of its editors have been Yankees of one stripe or another. This being so, we find ourselves pleasantly alarmed that more and more of our contributors live in California—a place which, for all practical purposes, didn't exist in 1815. Perhaps it is still true, in a literary way, that the country is tilted, that every year a fresh clutch of authors slides against the Pacific shores.

When we met Chester Aaron at the Cranbrook Writers' Conference last summer, he was already rehearsing stories gleaned from his years in the world of hospitals. One that stays with us includes a conversation between a pathologist and a surgeon during a brain tumor operation—a conversation concerning three sections taken from the patient on the table. "Now this," says the pathologist, "is definitely tumor. This—I really don't know—it could go either way. But this third section—this is unquestionably brain." "Okay," says the surgeon. "Let's close up." It turns out there's a little bit of M*A*S*H in every medical man, and Aaron's "Hold Your Breath!" (page 18) is a serious/comic insight into such matters.

George Keithley's *The Donner Party* may have given new life to the long poem; it is colloquial, low-key, stunningly human, and builds like a well-wrought fugue. In "Flesh and Dust" (page 35), we have in prose a less-tragic side of Keithley's interests.

Joseph Meeker and Todd Newberry are two men trespassing on each other's fields. Meeker is a humanist attracted by science; Newberry a scientist fascinated by humanities. The two of them are editing a collection of essays which bridge these worlds, and "The Only Witness" (page 47) is the title and introduction of that book.

Fortunately, these four from California have not appropriated the whole magazine to themselves. Represented as well are Easterners, Northerners, Southerners, and Midwesterners, not to mention a Canadian and a couple of authors who spend much of their time outside of North America. As always, the NAR tries to be catholic, eclectic, and innocent inside a political climate intent on narrowing such options to a fare-thee-well.

Our cover this time is the first in the NAR's history to be printed in four colors. The photo/collage is by Gay Burke, a former student of Jerry Uelsmann's at Florida and a member of the Northern Iowa art faculty.

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Barbara Sears

The Election: Trudeaumania in Decline

Amongst political pundits there was a marked air of caution before the Canadian general election. No one seemed very willing or able to predict anything, and as it turned out their non-committment was about as accurate a prediction as could have been made of the result. A massive electoral move from the Liberals—but a move to what? The first results indicated a stalemate between the two major parties which focused attention on the New Democratic Party, but left uncertain what would happen next. Minority government has returned to Canada. The comparative state of the parties on dissolution and on preliminary results was as follows:

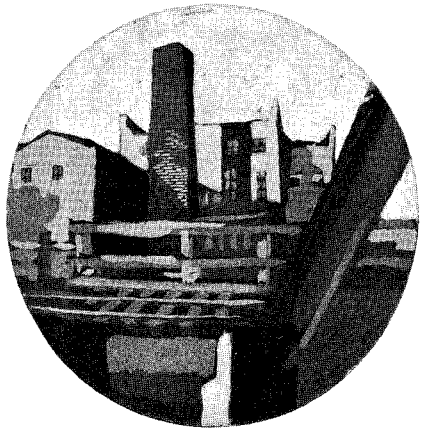
	dissolution	*post-election*
Liberals	147	109
Progressive Cons.	73	107
N.D.P.	25	31
Social Credit	13	15
Independent	2	2
Vacant	4	-----

The result was both more interesting and more surprising than the campaign would ever have led one to expect, but it was the kind of interest that Canadians now feel that they could well do without.

Minority governments, in which no one party holds an absolute majority of seats in the House of Commons, have become almost the norm in Canada since Diefenbaker's Tories defeated the Liberals under Louis St. Laurent in 1957. Diefenbaker headed two minority governments; Lester Pearson (who succeeded St. Laurent as leader of the Liberals) also headed two. Not an altogether surprising situation when you consider that the country has four main political parties vying for national support. However, in 1968 Trudeau was able to break through this fragmentation. Calling a general election only a few weeks after his election as leader of the Liberal Party, he swept the country with "Trudeaumania," riding to victory on a promise of "no promises" and an image nebulous enough to allow voters to read into it what they wanted the Prime Minister and his government to be.

But Trudeaumania, it seems, was a temporary aberration from traditional voting patterns. In 1968 the Liberals swept Ontario and British Columbia, and it is in these two provinces that their fate has been decided in this election. Their losses were concentrated here, a total of 30 seats. Looking at the historical development of the four major Canadian political parties, the current situation becomes a little more understandable.

The Liberals have always found their root strength in Québec. Historically, this dates back before Confederation in 1867, to the anti-clerical, reformist *Rouges*. The other main element of support for the Liberals stems from the Grits of Ontario, a reformist group which campaigned for parliamentary responsible government in the 1840s. The Progressive Conservative Party also dates back to pre-Confederation years and is a strange blend of old-line emotional loyalists (out of United Empire loyalists fleeing the American Revolution), moderate reformers, and the Progressive Party which sprang out of a radical protest movement of farmers on the Prairies. Its geographical base has traditionally been rural Ontario and the Prairies. The New Democratic Party dates only from 1961 and in philosophy comes closest to the social democratic parties of Europe. Its basis was the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation (CCF) Party, founded in 1932 by a group of farmer and labour parties in the Prairies joining forces with the Canadian Labour Congress to launch a new party. It has never held power federally, but forms the government in three western provinces: Saskatchewan, Manitoba, and British Columbia. The Social Credit Party has held power in two western provinces, both of which it recently lost—Alberta to the P.C.'s and British Columbia to the NDP. All Social Credit members of the last House of Commons came from Québec, its strength derived more from the rural protest vote than from a belief in its rather strange ideas about controlling monetary supply.



What seems to have happened in this election is that there has been a return to, and confirmation of, the regional bases of each of the parties. The Liberals were expectedly strong in Québec (56 seats, P.C.'s 2, Social Credit 15); the P.C.'s surged through Ontario and Alberta, gaining in the other Prairie provinces and British Columbia. And the New Democrats remain strong in Saskatchewan, gaining

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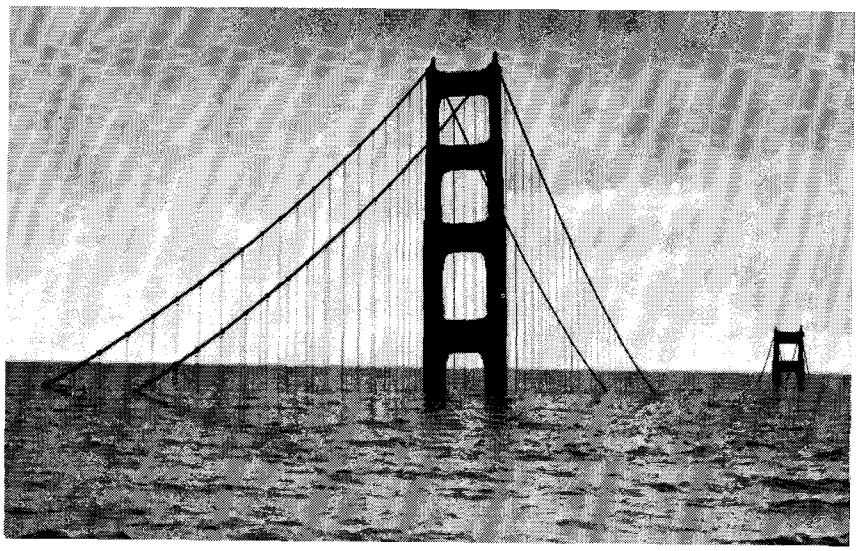

A probability report.

The Sierra Club doesn't say that our planet is likely to go under at any moment through our heedlessness. The composite photograph above merely depicts a possibility.

The probability is fairly remote.

Every day, however, we are making environmental changes with consequences we still don't understand or even suspect.

Take heat, for example.

Everytime we build a city block of high-rise buildings, we change the wind pattern so there's less wind to carry the heat away.

Everytime we heat or air-condition these buildings, use an electric appliance or light, drive a car or manufacture a product, 100% of that energy eventually winds up in the environment as heat.

And it's not only cities.

We know that when we clear a forest, the land beneath absorbs more heat. And this also happens when we plow fields, defoliate vegetation or take the life out of the soil. (One acre of grass, for example, has a potential cooling effect up to that of a 10-ton air conditioner.)

We are eliminating natural cooling systems and creating urban heat islands where the climate is hotter, rainier, cloudier, more humid and, of course, dirtier, too. These artificially created climates, called "micro-climates" are already altering their immediate surrounding environment. And, if we create enough of them, we might alter the temperature of the entire earth.

One day as we approach the global heat limits, the polar ice caps could begin to melt, flooding some cities of the earth.

There are limits to the alterations we can make on our ecosystem. We would do well to slow the pace of change so we can determine these limits scientifically, before we discover them accidentally.

Sierra Club

Mills Tower San Francisco

added strength in British Columbia and urban Ontario. Social Credit support increased markedly in Québec (to 24% of the popular vote) but declined elsewhere. Nationally—a confused situation, certainly in terms of *who* should govern and *how*. Looking at the campaign it is difficult to reason exactly why things went the way they did.

Perhaps the most extraordinary thing about the 1972 election campaign in Canada was how dull it all was: sixty days of no political or personal viciousness, little in terms of policies or programs, and, with the exception of David Lewis' campaign for the NDP, no sense of direction. It was as though the politicians, for fear of alienating anyone, decided to be as bland and inoffensive as possible—short, that is, of becoming totally unnoticeable.

The television campaign conducted by the Liberals and the P.C.'s (the NDP didn't have the money for an all-out television effort) showed this well. The Liberals came up with the slogan "the land is strong," and to illustrate this hardly debatable because hardly intelligible point, they showed pretty pictures of Canada. Of course, the one thing everyone agrees on is the beauty of the land, which when equated in this way with strength just seems to mean that truth got lost somewhere along the way. The truth implied in this strategy is that there is some causal relationship between the Liberal Party of Canada and all this beauty. An advertisement which at first seems to claim nothing is in fact making the ultimate claim, while at the same time playing Richard Nixon's non-combative game.

The meat in the P.C.'s advertisements was a little more obvious, perhaps because it is difficult to claim divine right from the have-not position. At the start of the campaign they were full of "Man-in-the-street" interviews—ordinary people talking against the Trudeau claim to have curbed inflation; criticizing his arrogance and lack of sympathy; complaining about unemployment. "*We can do better*," the Tories say, but not until the end of the advertisement do you know that it *is* the Tories. It could all well have

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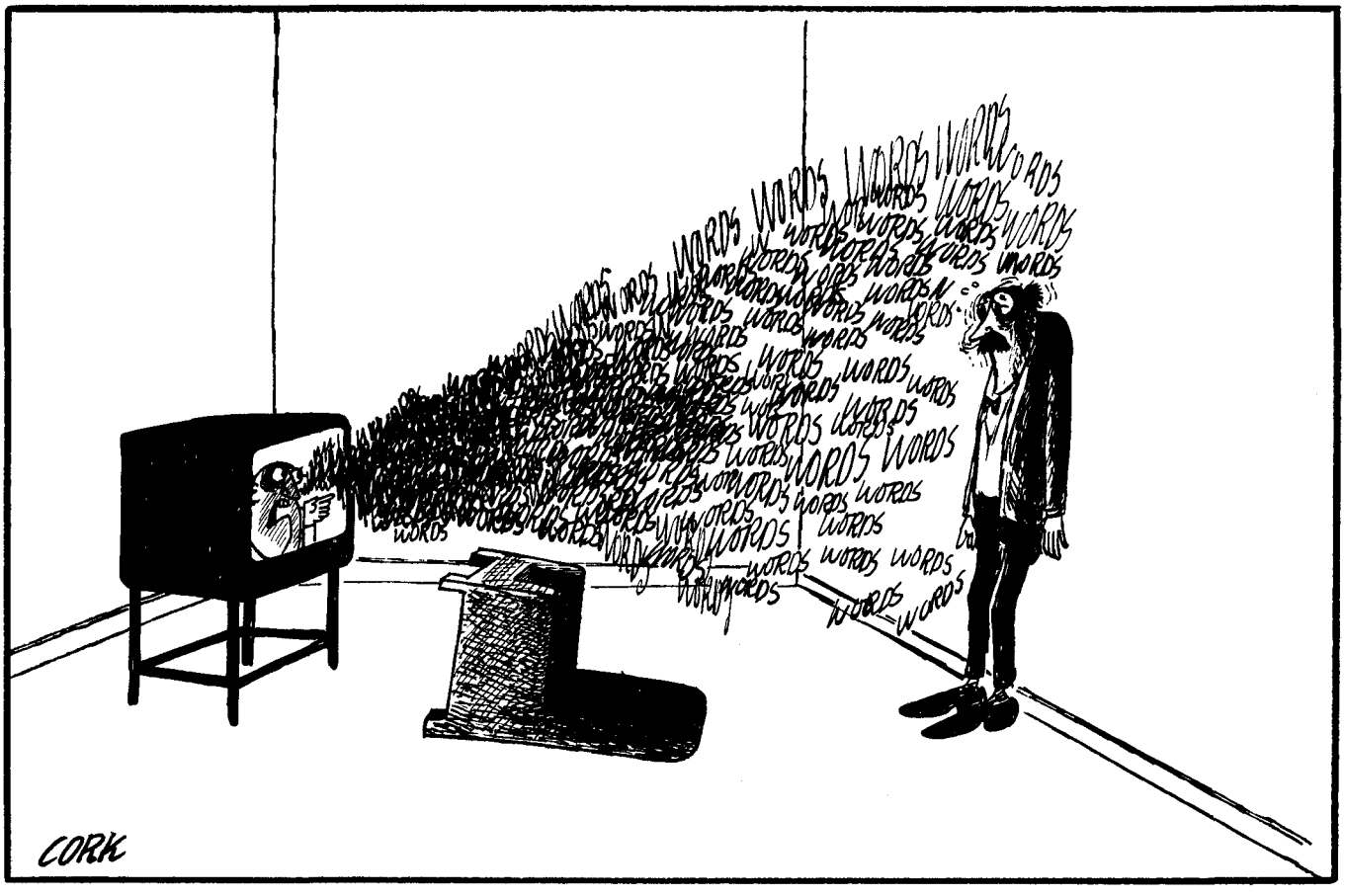
been for the NDP. Towards the end of the campaign there was a shift in Tory emphasis, from the negative aspects of the Trudeau regime to the positive qualities of Robert Stanfield as a leader: image advertisements of his meeting the people.

Away from television, the leaders of the political parties were forced to deal more directly with what were seen to be the major campaign issues: unemployment and the Unemployment Insurance Commission, inflation, "corporate welfare", foreign (American) ownership of industry, the policies of the Department of Regional Economic Expansion, bilingualism in the public service.

On unemployment, Statistics Canada, the federal government agency which collects facts, dealt what should have been a decisive blow to the Liberals in announcing that the unemployment rate had reached 7.1% for September 1972, the highest figure for that month in ten years. However, this seemed to disturb the press and the electorate far less than stories of fraudulent claims on the Unemployment Insurance Commission. This Commission was established with a budget to cope with an unemployment rate of 4%, contributions coming from both employer and employee and being paid out to the unemployed. Naturally, with an unemployment rate of 7.1%, the Commission has a deficit, the exact size of which no one was able to establish. The interesting point here is what was seen to be the *reason* for unemployment; it was strongly suggested that the explanation lay in the generosity of the Unemployment Insurance scheme. That is, people were not working because they could make as much or more money by being unemployed. Unemployment had nothing to do with there being no jobs. In this argument, the unemployment figures are at best misleading and the unemployed (some of them, but how many?) are lazy. Both the Liberals and the P.C.'s have been schizophrenic on this issue, aware of the possibility of backlash, but presumably not wanting to offend either the employed or the jobless. (7.1% is around 500,000, the electorate around 12,000,000; elections have been lost on less.) Trudeau said there are plenty of jobs for those who want to work, and left Bryce Mackasey, the Cabinet Minister responsible for the Unemployment Insurance Commission to defend its administration (difficult if there really are all those jobs, and Mr. Mackasey did not have an easy time). Robert Stanfield tried to play it both ways, and this seems to have worked. On the one hand he criticized the unemployment rate as being the result of Liberal anti-inflationary policy, while on the other he criticized the Liberal administration of the UIC as failing to distinguish the real unemployed from the unreal.

For David Lewis, this has been a non-issue and he has not tried to make political capital out of it, preferring to emphasize what has been the one new issue of the campaign: "*corporate welfare.*" He coined the phrase "corporate welfare bums" to describe corporations which have taken advantage of loop-



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holes in the taxation system, using them to secure what amount to interest-free loans of an astronomical figure. The sums involved here (an estimated $4.7 billion by the end of 1972) would more than pay for any deficit in the unemployment insurance scheme. The thoroughness with which Lewis and his researchers have documented this phenomenon, and the lack of any defensive response from the corporations which stand accused, forced Stanfield and Trudeau to recognize "corporate welfare" as a campaign issue. Stanfield has supported Lewis. And Trudeau has wriggled uncomfortably, largely because the Lewis position represents the one-time tax reform position of the Liberal Party.

According to Lewis, in 1951 the corporations paid 28% of all direct taxes collected by the federal government and individuals paid 26.7%. By 1973 the proportions will be 12.2% from the corporations, 49.9% from individuals. Inequitable as this seems, it wasn't so much the general situation that excited the press, as the specific examples Lewis quoted. *Shell Canada paid no income tax at all* on earnings of more than a half billion dollars between 1964 and 1969. The International Nickel Company of Canada paid no income tax in 1971 on net earnings of $210 million, and even received an income tax credit. In his documentation, Lewis made it very clear that he was not against a system which allows corporations to accumulate profits; simply that he was against their getting away with too much. At the very least, they should be expected to contribute a "fair" share to the common weal.

For David Lewis, at 63, this will probably have been his last election campaign. He really meant to go out in style. Unlike previous leaders of the NDP/CCF, he has fought as though he could win. He and everyone else knew he couldn't, but the determination to fight, *really* to fight, made an extraordinary difference to the NDP. Political commentators were unanimous in praise of the style with which Lewis fought, grateful perhaps for the content he gave to an otherwise lacklustre 60 days. More people were aware of the NDP and were taking it seriously, though in the end the NDP did not do as well as had been anticipated, taking only 17.4% of the popular vote.

Robert Stanfield has, everyone agrees, worked extremely hard, and it seems to have paid off—though how much the swing away from the Liberals is due to his and his party's efforts is debatable. Far more likely is that the results reflect an anti-Trudeau vote, summarizing a feeling of disappointment after four years in which nothing seems very different from what it has always been. Flowers and no promises have given way to the everyday reality of politics: compromise.

Trudeau, of course, has moved steadily to the right throughout his political career, and this latest development could merely accentuate the trend. He decided to fight the election with as little reference to the concrete elements of his record as possible, preferring to stress vague images in the hope of repeating 1968. This was a mistake. You can't defend a record in terms of images, certainly not with unemployment and rampant inflation contradicting the rosy view of reality presented in your television advertisements. His whole position was an impossible one, and it now seems strange that nobody saw this. To be elected almost for your apolitical nature, because you are not what people have grown to expect of a politician, is one thing. To be re-elected after four years of being swallowed by the very things you seemed to despise is entirely something else. It may not originally have been a conscious deception, but at the very least it now appears as—inconsistent?

There were also specific issues contributing to the Liberal reversal. Around Ottawa, the Liberal policy on the implementation of bilingualism in the public service aroused considerable anti-French and anti-Liberal backlash. Instead of remaining at the "functional" level (enabling both English and French Canadians to deal with the public service in their own language) bilingualism has developed into a definite individual requirement. A consequence of this was that many unilingual civil servants felt their careers threatened, and expressed this fear by returning two P.C.'s to the Commons for ridings which have previously been fairly solid Liberal seats.

All of this is, at best, a partial explanation of what must be considered a defeat for Trudeau and the Liberals. Canada has voiced an undirected and ill-defined protest, a protest which, as with Nixon in the U. S. and Heath in Britain, gives support to the right. The major difference here is the extent to which Liberal strength in Québec has saved the situation for them. Instead of a Tory landslide, dead heat on a merry-go-round.

There are two theories of minority government: the one in which it is seen as a highly responsive mechanism, acting swiftly to get things done, the other in which it is seen as totally impassive, too frightened to do anything for fear of losing. It is an "all things to all men" phenomenon, consequently being nothing much to anyone, and nobody likes it. It focuses too much attention on votes in Parliament (the government can be toppled at any time on relatively unimportant issues); brings back memories of sick MP's carted into the house like cattle for their votes; gives disproportionate power to third parties. The key here is the NDP, and David Lewis has indicated that while a coalition is out of the question, he means to exploit the situation to push through NDP policies on tax reform, pensions—in fact anything he can persuade whoever is the winner to take.

Trudeau has yet to survive the inevitable "no confidence" vote in the Commons (to meet January 4th), which he can only do with NDP support.

Thereafter—well, things are, to say the least, uncertain. Trudeau, in the formation of his cabinet, has shifted three prominent Quebeckers from sensitive to less controversial positions, and has lost one radical supporter in Bryce Mackasey. Immigration regulations have been tightened up. These things together mark a definite shift to the right, purportedly in response to the mood of the electorate. It is a shift which does not augur well for collaboration with the NDP in the new Parliament, a shift which can only make us certain of one thing: that very soon we will have another election.

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Leo J. Hertzel

Driving Down the Mississippi

Anyone who has driven the freeways of Los Angeles or Indianapolis or Boston in recent years knows the chaos, confusion, and congestion of these superhighways supposedly designed to simplify the flow of travel. Anyone who has watched a part of a freeway system chew into parks or residential and metropolitan areas alike, cutting up the natural lines of parishes, school districts, neighborhoods, knows that these six and eight lane slabs of concrete are systematically slicing towns and cities to pieces. Anyone familiar with the statistical analyses of environmental groups and, recently, some government agencies, knows that far from solving the American transportation problem, the building of more and more freeways and highways simply increases the problem—the more highway space, the more cars; the more cars, the more need for space.

The simple fact is that the American transportation system is in a state of chaos, and from all indications things are getting worse by the day. The relationships among freeways, parkways, mass transit systems, railroads, bicycles, and airlines are simply unknown. The nation has no over-all transportation policy or plan. The existence of powerful trucking and automotive lobbies in Washington who work for more and more highways to accommodate more and more cars and trucks certainly do nothing to clarify the problem. The stakes are high in the highway game—one critic estimates that Americans spent about 94 billion dollars on automobiles in 1970; transportation uses 75% of all rubber made in the United States, 20% of the aluminum, 27% of the cement, and over half of the petroleum. Such a substantial part of our national production is not to be tampered with easily, though impassioned environmentalists cry out frantically against the resulting pollution of the air and waste of the land.

The answer to the environmentalists has been the TV commercial American

The symbolic marker for the Great River Road was approved by the Mississippi River Parkway Planning Commission in 1958, and its official colors are "forest green (interstate green) and white on a white background." State or Province names appear on the design as illustrated below.

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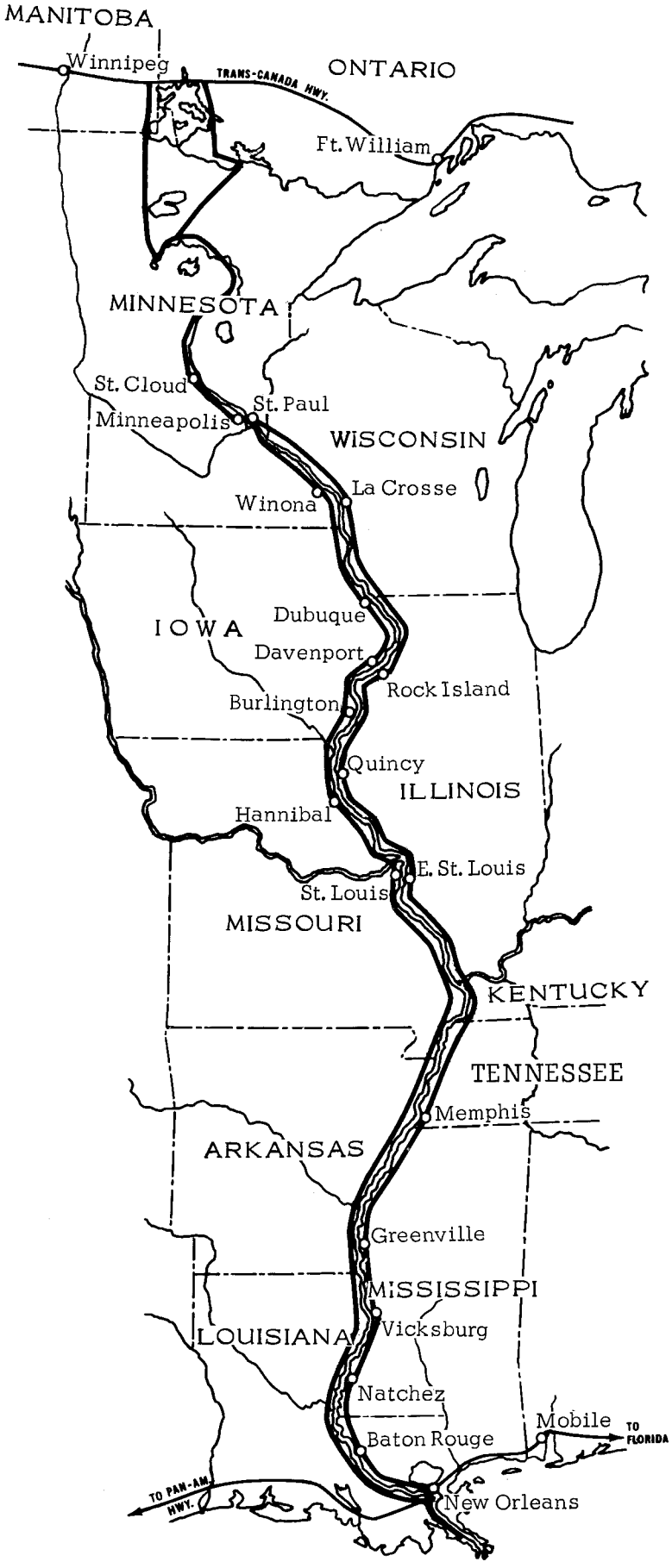

dream, the sport car with the sexy blond and the open road stretching away to freedom; the answer to those who cannot permit themselves even to hope for such release would be General Motors, *Friends* magazine or Plymouth's *Traveler*, folksy publications urging readers to throw the kids in the station wagon and take a trip to Keokuk. Travel. Go. Move around. It's the American way. And be sure you do it in an automobile. When was the last time you saw a TV commerical for bicycles?

In recent years environmental groups, concerned citizens and some political figures have been increasingly active in demanding a more coordinated, conservative transportation program for the United States—efficient mass transit systems, limitations on the number of automobiles in certain areas, a curtailment on the building of additional highways, maybe even some kind of nationwide attempt to change the American life style that has come to be centered around moving about in private automobiles. While these efforts have had limited success in some places, the building of more roads to accommodate more automobiles continues.

One part of the transportation chaos, the "more roads syndrome," that has not yet received much wide attention, particularly among conservationists, is the so-called Great River Road project. The project has been in a kind of limbo-planning stage since 1936 but the proposed Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1972 submitted by Representative John Blatnik, Democrat from Minnesota and chairman of the powerful Committee on Public Works, includes provisions for the expenditure of over 60 million dollars during the next few years on the project. The bill describes the Great

The proposed Great River Road—actually two roads over most of its route, traveling both banks of the Mississippi—would stretch from the Trans-Canada Highway near Winnipeg to the Gulf at New Orleans, and would traverse ten states.

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River Road as a "project for building a scenic highway along both sides of the Mississippi from the Gulf of Mexico to Lake Itasca, Minnesota . . . . The 2,000 miles of its length utilizes both Federal highways, highways on Federal lands and state highways where appropriate . . . The funds provided under this section will be apportioned according to needs among the ten states in an effort to proceed with the construction of the road as a prototype of a national scenic highway system." In effect, the bill provides money for Minnesota, Wisconsin, Iowa, Illinois, Missouri, Kentucky, Tennessee, Arkansas, Mississippi, and Louisiana to begin construction of linking highways from the Gulf to the Canadian border.

Proponents of the bill see it as a modest and wise alternative to the present frenzied construction of giant freeways and interstates. Perhaps the most attractive feature of the Great Road proposal is the built-in conservation and environment protection concept.

"The central part of the United States has a great story to tell," John Blatnik recently told a Washington, D. C., meeting. "Countless Americans, seeking expanded recreation opportunities, will find a wealth of tradition and contribution to the American way of life along the Great River Road . . . . [it] will demonstrate to all America the great potential of the scenic highway."

Representative John Culver of Iowa is co-sponsor of the Great Road bill and a believer in its merit. Earlier this year he told a Great River Road convention held on board the *Delta Queen* at La Crosse, Wisconsin, "I do want to emphasize to the Commission it is my understanding the Great River Road is not to become an expressway or superhighway, designed for heavy commercial traffic and thus defacing the values we are trying to preserve along the banks of the Mississippi . . . . In the Great River Road we clearly see highway improvement and development are not incompatible with preserving and enhancing scenic and environmental values."

The federal highway bill of 1972 which contained provisions for initial work on the Great Road died in the last hours of this Congress, when the House could not muster a quorum to consider a compromise House-Senate version of the bill. However, the matter will most certainly come up again next year and, according to one Washington source, "Nothing will prevent the Federal Highway Administration and ten participating states from continuing their piecemeal financing out of regular highway funds." The fact is, however, that while nothing will *prevent* federal and state highway agencies from work on the road "piecemeal," the agencies seem generally apathetic toward the Road and give it low priority against the further construction of superhighways and expressways.

The Great River Road concept appears to differ from the sort of high-speed freeway thinking we have come to expect from highway engineers. Some portions of the Great Road proposal are not entirely clear. (It overlaps the Mississippi River Parkway proposal in many ways; this proposal would extend the Great Road concept to include highways in Canada circling the Lake of the Woods and going west to Winnipeg. Further, the Great Road idea has been around so long that earlier statements about its nature tend to conflict with more recent thinking on the matter.) Nevertheless, people like John Culver see the road as a kind of modified national parkway designed to preserve scenic and wilderness areas rather than destroy them. Speaking of the proposal in 1966, J. L. Obenachain, Regional Planning Engineer, Bureau of Public Roads, told an audience in Pennsylvania:

The Mississippi River Rats, Ltd., is an organization founded in Wisconsin on behalf of the "orderly development and preservation" of the Mississippi and the lands adjacent to it. At the right, a bumper sticker displayed by Rats members.

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The National Park Service defines a national parkway as a Federally owned, elongated park featuring a road designed for pleasure travel and embracing scenic, recreational, or historic features of national significance. Access from adjoining property is limited and commercial traffic is not permitted. A national parkway can be established only by an act of Congress. For the national parkways now authorized the right-of-way is acquired by the States and turned over to the Federal Government with the exception of those in the Washington area for which the Federal Government participates in the cost of the right-of-way . . . .

Therefore, the first concept for a pleasure road along the Mississippi River was a parkway and preferably a national parkway since 10 states were involved and the river had national significance.

Obenachain then went on to quote a Bureau of Public Roads survey of 1951 that concluded, "A national parkway along the Mississippi was not feasible. For the greatest portion of the river's length on both banks, favorable locations had been preempted by highways, railroads, and towns and cities." Obenachain then continued, "In lieu of a national parkway, the survey recommended that a modified type of parkway or scenic road be developed using existing highways for the greater part of its length. Commercial traffic would continue to use existing roads." The survey's recommendation was for a series of connecting highways, most of which would be available to commercial traffic—something a bit different from the "prototype of a national scenic highway system" as described in Blatnik and Culver's Bill.

F. W. Cron, a Supervisory Highway Engineer for the Bureau of Public Roads would seem to reflect this interpretation of the Great Road as mainly a north-south highway with heavy commercial use. In a paper entitled "A Realistic Look at the Great River Road," Cron writes, "The Great River Road is not a parkway in the strict sense, for it departs in several particulars from the definition of the American Association of State Highway Officials: '*Parkway*—An arterial highway for non-commercial traffic, with full or partial control of access, and usually located within a park or a ribbon of park-like development.' Rather, the Great River Road, as described by the Joint Report, is a highway with parkway features, and in some respects is a new idea in interstate highway development."

Cron goes on to state, however, that he believes the Great River Road has possibilities as a desirable recreational facility. But he warns that without very close supervision the road could become just another highway, "and even those sections which are now unspoiled will in time be

A Statement:

By Ray J. Eckstein, Pilot of the Mississippi River Parkway Commission

Environmentalists who understand the concept of the Great River Road have few complaints. The idea is not to pave both banks of the Mississippi River. Existing highways already make up 80% of the Great River Road system, and few people would be able to enjoy the river if these roads did not exist. The Mississippi River Parkway Commission is encouraging improvement of these highways, land acquisition, scenic easements and zoning to protect the scenery along the route.

The scenic qualities of the valley will be of little value to the public in future years, unless a corridor is protected so that people traveling the route can enjoy the beauty without the distraction of unsightly billboards, junk yards and pizza parlors. A combination program in the 10 river states of acquiring land outright, scenic easements and proper zoning will provide such a corridor.

A recent field task force study by the Department of Interior and the Army Corps of Engineers estimated the present recreation use of the upper river alone amounts to 20 million recreation days annually. It is anticipated by the task force that in 25 years this use would exceed 100 million recreation days annually.

The report states, "Completion of the Great River Road will provide a pleasant, much needed access to the river. In fact, the Great River Road and national recreation area would complement each other ideally. Something would be lacking, if there were one without the other."

If the use of the river is to triple in 25 years, tourist facilities will triple. The Great River Road will control the development of these facilities in such a way that the locations of the sites do not ruin the scenic corridor the River Road will provide.

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overtaken by the blight that has ruined the appearance of so many of our once-beautiful roadsides."

On the other hand, the "Recommended Plan" for the Great Road made to Congress by the Bureau of Public Roads and National Park Services in 1951 suggests that the goal is something different than a north-south commercial artery, something closer to a "prototype of a national scenic highway system."

According to the report, approximately 60% of the presently existing highways would make up the Great Road and the remaining 40% of the Road would be new construction on new locations. "In some sections two lanes would suffice; in the more populous areas four lanes, divided, or perhaps even six lanes would be required." The report makes it very clear that on the newly constructed 40% of the Great Road, no commercial traffic would be allowed. Wherever possible no private access to the parkway should exist and public entrances should be posted "No commercial traffic." Because the Great Road is thought of as a road for sightseers who should not worry continually about other traffic entering from side roads, the report recommends that the entire road be made a "limited access" facility as soon as possible.

Some enthusiasts for the plan have further suggested that speeds on the limited access sections of the road be held to 45 miles per hour. While highway engineers do not rule out this limitation completely, it does not appear that the present concept of the road includes such a restriction.

In light of these partially conflicting ideas of what the Road should/could be, it is interesting to study the language of the Federal Aid Highway Act of 1972 justifying and describing the road:

(a) (1) The congress finds—

(A) that there are significant esthetic and recreational values to be derived from making places of scenic and natural beauty and historical, archeological, or scientific interest accessible to the public;

(B) that there is a deficiency in the number and quality of scenic roads, parkways, and highways available to the motoring public;

(C) that with increased population, greater leisure time and higher percentage of privately owned automotive vehicles, more families than ever are seeking suitable areas in which to drive for pleasure and recreation;

(D) that the growth of cities and large metropolitan centers has decreased the quantity of open-space and recreational areas available to the general public, especially urban dwellers; and

(E) that substantial economic, social, cultural, educational and psychological benefits could be gained from a nation-wide system of at-

Though many environmental groups endorse the concept of the Great River Road, some have reservations. The Citizens' Committee on Natural Resources, for example, opposes the idea and calls it a "foot in the door for another huge Federal road-building boondoggle."

If land is not acquired, along with scenic easements and local zoning, a unique section of America will be destroyed by commercialization.

At present, the Great River Road is a combination of dirt, gravel, blacktop and expressway. The expressways are not desired, the dirt and gravel should be paved. Waysides and historical markers should be provided where appropriate. New roads should be constructed where feasible, passing through scenic areas to tie the system together. The new sections would provide additional access for the public to the river, and often times replace dangerous or worn out roads away from the river.

The Delta Queen *which plies the Mississippi River has received national attention because of the Safety at Sea Law which requires her removal. The* Delta Queen *is one of a kind, a remnant of our past. She is beautiful! The people said "save the* Delta Queen" *and she has been saved.*

In 1965, the President's Council on Recreation and Natural Beauty reported it is still highly desirable to develop the Great River Road, but went on to say, "many of the most scenic portions have been lost due to commercial development since the idea was conceived over 30 years ago."

The Mississippi River Valley is one of a kind and displays hundreds of remnants from our past, which should be saved for future generations. The Valley is also beautiful.

At this time in the history of the project, it would not be inappropriate, but encouraging, to hear the people say, "save the Great River Road." Perhaps in 25 years, people will still be able to enjoy the Delta Queen *while traveling the Mississippi River Parkway, if we the people care enough to preserve the scenic beauty and history of our country.*

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River Road proponents argue that any new highway construction would consist of "parkways," not high-speed freeways—though existing roads along the route may have set unhappy precedents. Above, a portion of I-90 which crosses the Mississippi north of LaCrosse, Wisconsin. Below, a section outside Winona, Minnesota.

> tractive roadways making possible widespread enjoyment of natural and recreational resources
>
> (therefore) As soon as possible after the date of enactment of this section, the Secretary shall establish criteria for the location and construction or reconstruction of the Great River Road by the ten States bordering the Mississippi River . . . .

Although much of this language sounds like *Friends* magazine urging you to take the family to Jackson this weekend, and nothing in the language suggests that less travel might be preferable to more travel, nevertheless the language does recognize some values and establishes some goals that highway engineering projects have long ignored. And although Linda Katz of the Highway Action Coalition, an environmental protection organization in Washington, was quoted as saying about the Great Road proposal, "It is incredible and outrageous", most environmentally oriented groups that have studied the proposal favor it to some degree.

"Environmentalists who understand the concept of the Great River Road have few complaints," says Ray J. Eckstein, "Pilot" of The Great River Road Association, a kind of pressure group dedicated to improving and publicizing the Road. "The idea is not to pave both banks of the Mississippi River. Existing highways already make up 80% of the Great River Road system, and few people would be able to enjoy the river if these roads did not exist. The Mississippi River Parkway Commission (Great River Road Association) is encouraging improvement of these highways, land acquisition, scenic easements and zoning to protect the scenery along the route."

Dr. Spencer Smith of the Washington based Citizens Committee on Natural Resources supports Eckstein's position, saying the Road has "some merit."

The Mississippi River Rats, Ltd., also support Eckstein's position. The Rats are an organization founded by Tom Leverich of La Crosse, Wisconsin, and dedicated to, "promote and expedite orderly development and preservation of the Mississippi River, the bottom lands, and bluffs as well as

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It is impossible to deny the Great River Road Association's claim that the banks of the Mississippi often provide scenes of great beauty. How to make these scenes accessible to more people – this is a question troubling to some environmentalists.

other streams." The organization has approximately three-thousand members and the motto "Clean land, clean rivers, clean fun for everyone."

Former Chief Rat Leverich explains that the Rats support the Great Road project because it would provide a plan for the preservation of the beauty along the highway–that the completion of the road would make the scenic beauty accessible to large numbers of people and provisions in the proposal would help greatly to "create a permanence to the beauty of the river."

The Rats publish a regular report, appropriately called "The Rathouse Report." The most recent issue of the Report carries on its front page an editorial quoting a *Des Moines Register* editorial titled "20 Years of 'Foot Dragging on the Great River Road' ".

"Somewhere in the commission's (Iowa Highway Commission) budget there should be money that can be spent annually to make driving a pleasure, not to get somewhere a few minutes faster. Safe fast highways are important, but not to the total exclusion of roads that reveal the beauty of nature and lift the human spirit," the Rat publication echoes the *Register*.

"Perhaps Iowa Rats should put a little Rat spirit and support behind their Iowa members of the Great River Association and Mississippi River Parkway Commission. They exist to promote the Great River Road and we stand solidly behind the program," concludes the Rat report.

Conservationists and environment people generally support the Great Road because of its "scenic easement" provision. Scenic corridors on federal parkways are 800 to 1000 feet wide and are owned by the federal government. However such a wide corridor would be impractical for the Great Road because sections of it pass (or will pass) through rich farm lands where the land is worth hundreds of dollars an acre or else through suburban residential developments of even greater value. The Great Road project involves a scenic corridor largely consisting of "scenic easement" rather than land owned by the state or federal government. In acquiring scenic easement, the state would purchase the right of the property owners to use the land for purposes adverse to the parkway, but not disturb their use of the land for other purposes.

This scenic easement plan is one of the elements that makes the Great Road particularly attractive for the River Rats. They point out that unless action is taken soon, industrial and commercial interests will systematically destroy all of the natural beauty of the river corridor.

In addition to the scenic easement procedure, the Great Road plan involves the outright purchase of some land by the states or the federal government. "It would be necessary to protect the quality of the landscape as seen from the proposed parkway [sic]," writes one advocate of the Road. "Marginal strips of wildwood, bluff faces, swamps and islands would be acquired outright and added to the right-of-way. Such lands are generally inexpensive and are best preserved for public purposes. Many of these areas should remain permanently undeveloped in order to provide refuge for wildlife, to further conservation of the soil and to give man a bit of unspoiled breathing space."

The possibility of a road plan that would actually protect the wilderness rather than destroy it is an attractive one. And though the Great Road project does mean the building of additional highways in a nation already burdened with too many highways, too many automobiles, the Great Road also promises the preservation of a wide corridor of natural beauty through the center of the nation. Nearly everyone seems to agree that the Great Road proposal is superior to almost any other plan now in existence, certainly superior to the continuing construction of urban freeways and superhighways designed for travel at high rates of speed.

What are the chances for such a scenic roadway becoming a reality? The answer appears to be that the chances at present are slim. While some existing roads have been marked with the green Pilot Wheel marker of the Great Road, very little has been done on construction of the 40% new limited-access highways necessary to the heart of the plan. Under the Blatnik-Culver bill, the federal government would make what amounts to token funds available to the states for the project. Fifteen years ago, a federal estimate of the total cost of the Great

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Road was 1.5 billion dollars; costs have more than doubled since then. Thus, the Blatnik-Culver proposal of offering the states sixty million dollars over the next two years is what a Blatnik aide calls "a drop in the bucket."

In the states themselves, highway departments are reluctant to allot state funds for the project. They maintain that the road's priority is low in comparison with the needs for other highway construction. In Iowa, for example, some citizens recently attempted to persuade the Iowa Highway Commission to pave a twelve mile stretch of a country riverbank road between Keokuk and Montrose. This was to have been the first step in the building of Iowa's part of the Road. The Highway Commission was unwilling to undertake the project. After negotiations that eventually included Governor Robert Ray (who later was quoted as saying, "I'll say flatly that we should have the Great River Road"), Ray reportedly asked State Representative John Clark to push a bill in the next legislature designating the 327 miles of posted Iowa riverbank roads as an official river scenic road.

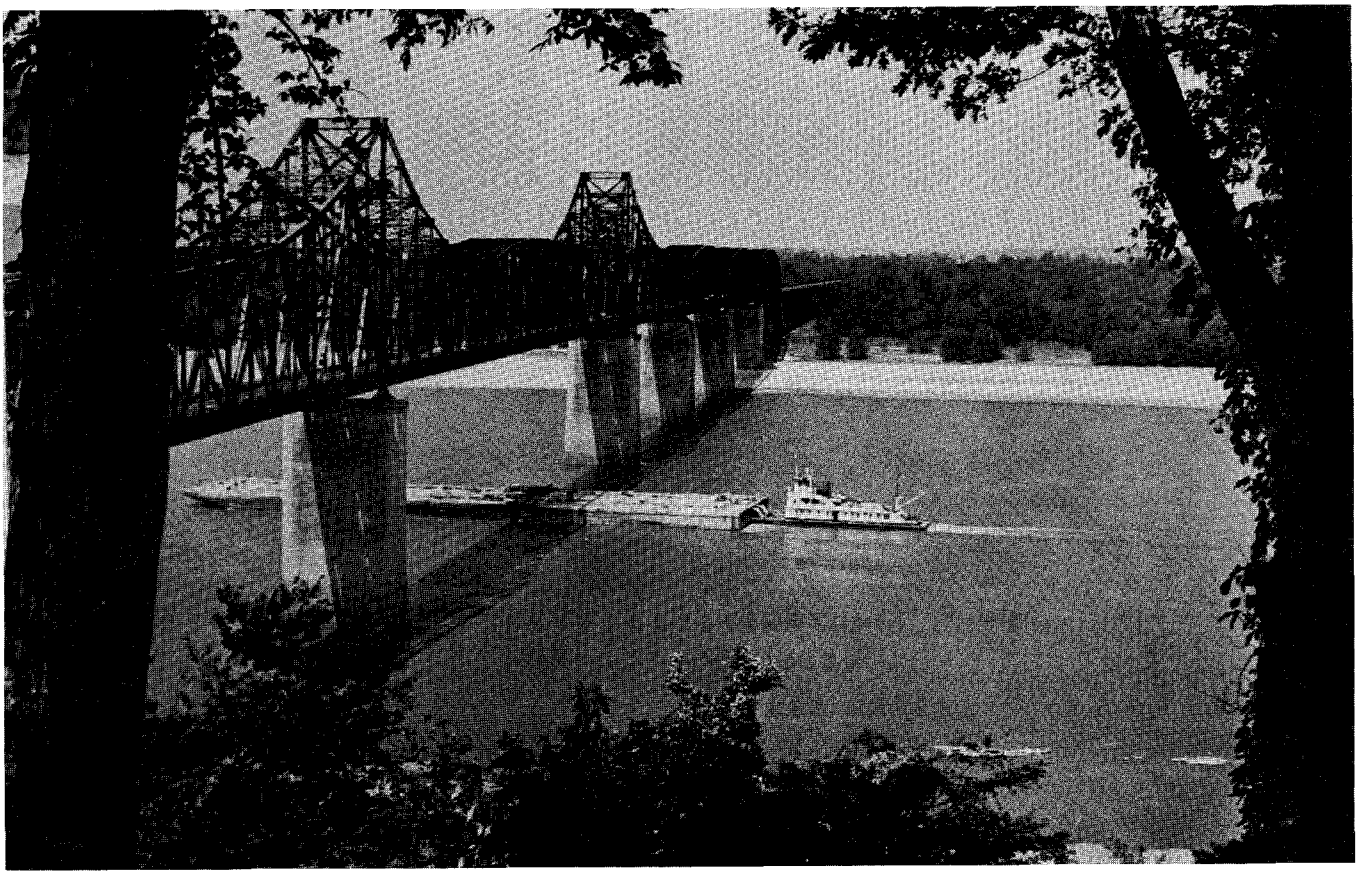
Highway Director Joseph Coupal said the department had no objection to the river road project—just that the state has more pressing highway priorities.

And so it has gone in most of the ten states. "Nobody believes the Great River Road will ever happen," says Eugene Broos of the Minnesota State Highway Department. In 1969 the department issued an elaborate, colorful book called *Review of the Road* with an extensive description of proposed routes of the Great Road and alternate proposals for nearly every proposal. But the book seems more a token gesture than any real plan for action. "Frankly, we're not too enthusiastic about the project," says Broos. "We don't have enough money to invest on a project like this."

And yet in Iowa and Minnesota and the other eight states, federal funds and, to a lesser degree, state funds continue to flow into the construction of the freeways and the urban expressways that are slowly choking us all. A limited access scenic roadway with protected areas of wilderness through the heart of the land appears a plan easily shelved in favor of more of the same construction that has brought us our present congestion.

Of course not everyone endorses the Great Road idea. Some conservation-minded groups are opposed to the building of any more highways. Pointing out that a large minority of Americans are not served by highways geared for private automobiles, such groups note that nationally, of all the families with less than $3000 a year income, 54% do not own cars. Further, of all people over 65 years of age, at least 45% do not have access to a private automobile. The Great Road would scarcely help these people. Rather than provide scenic roadways which will, after all, encourage more and more private travel, some groups advocate government investment in systems of mass transportation. Such arguments have validity, of course, but one answer could be that the government would easily be able to do both—build the Great Road and promote mass transit systems—if it would change its present highway funding system and superhighway obsession.

Part One of Two Parts



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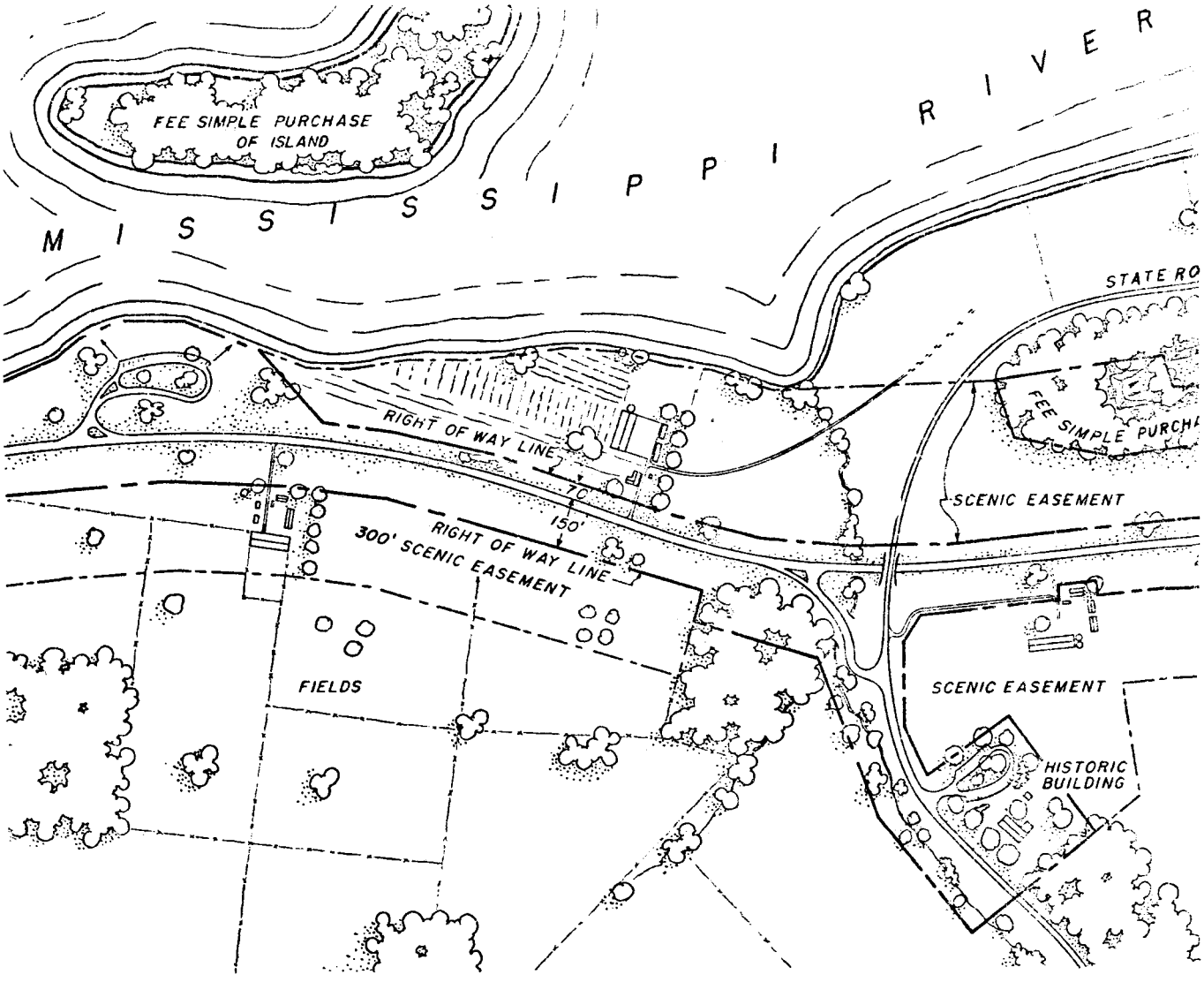

Parkway Land Controls in Rural Areas

Hypothetical drawing to illustrate variability of parkway land takings so as to provide:

1- A development width of 220 feet with space for widening of pavement if necessary in the future.

2- Control over the sightliness of rural scenery by means of easements, so that lands could continue in present ownership and remain in use as farms.

3- Outright purchase of occasional historic sites, wooded islands, swamps, bluff faces, and marginal lands.

Illustration of proposed scenic easement and outright purchase of occasional lands. The scenic easement on both sides of the Great Road and surrounding the "historic building" would prevent the erection of drive-ins, root beer stands, billboards and other commercial enterprises, thus allowing the travellers a clean view of the land. In the case of the island the state would purchase the land outright and allow it to remain in a natural state.

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Thomas A. Edison

The Storage Battery and the Motor Car

Writing in the NAR in April, 1901, Mr. Edison describes his explorations into a problem contemporary with him, contemporary with us.

The final perfection of the storage battery, which I believe has been accomplished, will in my opinion bring about a multitude of changes and improvements in our business and social economy. No one of these will interest the public more just now than the doing away with the chauffeur, the irresponsible instrument, in the public eye at least, of so many recent accidents with automobiles.

Of the new storage battery, which was admirably described in *Harper's Weekly* last December, and about which a great many erroneous and unauthorized statements have since been made, I can now say that it has sustained and overcome the four thorough tests applied to it, and it is now, at this writing, undergoing the fifth, and last, with every prospect of the same result.

These four tests, which I will describe briefly, and this fifth now in progress, point to the new nickel-iron battery as being in fact the only real storage battery known. The attempts to compare its performance with those of the lead storage batteries, so called, now in use in automobiles and elsewhere for lack of something better, make it not improper to declare the facts. A real storage battery must be reversible, like a dynamo, which converts power into electricity and *vice versa.*

A storage battery, to deserve the name, should be a perfectly reversible instrument, receiving and giving out power like a dynamo motor, without any deterioration of the mechanism of conversion. The present lead storage battery in an automobile does not meet this condition. It gradually becomes less and less efficient and in a few months wholly inoperative. The acid environment prevents a proper mechanical construction, its chemical reactions are of the most capricious character; it must be watched and treated with great care—so great care, indeed, as to make it impracticable for general use. It can be made, as far as mere weight is concerned, of sufficient lightness to meet all the wants of commerce and pleasure; but, if made light, it rapidly becomes useless.

On the other hand, the nickel-iron storage cell has an ideal environment. Being in an alkaline solution, none of the ingredients is attacked by the solution in any degree. The chemical reactions are also of the most simple and stable character. The conditions permit of a perfect mechanical construction, and, finally, it remains uninjured under any condition which one could imagine, when in the hands of an inexpert. The weight can be made to meet every exigency of commercial vehicle traction, and up to the present time there are no signs of chemical deterioration, even in a battery which has been charged and discharged over 700 times.

I have been working for a number of years on the problem of a true storage battery. The experiments have been continuous for the past three years. The above may be considered the first stage.

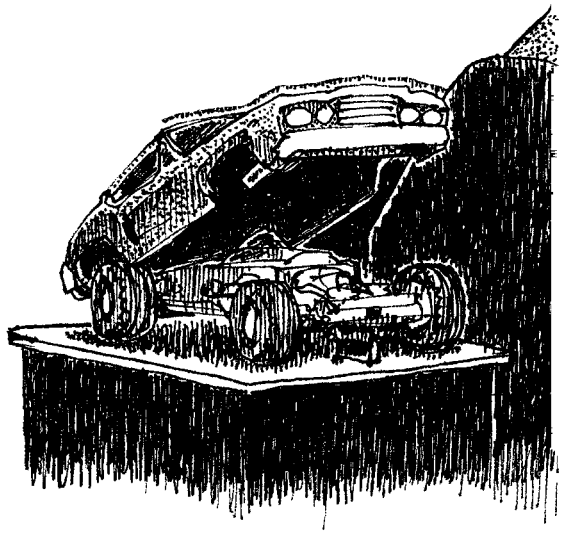
Tests on the battery have been going on for over a year and a half; this was the second stage.

The construction of chemical works and a manufacturing plant for the cells was the third stage.

The manufacture of standard cells from the tools is the fourth stage.

Twenty-one cells made in the factories, weighing 332 pounds, were placed in a Baker automobile, the total weight with two men in the vehicle being 1,075 pounds. The vehicle made a run, on one charge, of sixty-two miles over country roads, containing many grades, some as steep as twelve feet in a hundred. At the end of this run the vehicle was making eighty-three per cent of the original speed. The average speed over the entire distance was 11.2 miles per hour. On a comparatively level country road a little heavy from a recent rain, the same vehicle on one charge came to a stop at the eighty-fifth mile.

In spite of assertions to the contrary, I think the storage



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battery carriage, by the aid of the new battery, will come ultimately within the reach of the man of moderate means. Driving through the many miles of streets in the suburbs of New York, I have been impressed with the fact that something like eighty per cent of the residences have no carriage houses. The storage battery carriage, with the new battery, should enable the owners of forty per cent of these residences to have a servicable pleasure vehicle at their beck and call, without hiring a coachman to keep it clean and run it, with no horses to eat their heads off and no oats and hay to buy. With an initial outlay of from $700 and upwards, the storage battery automobile can be used once a week at the cost of a fifty-cent charge, or twice for a dollar, and so on, the cost of use being met as it is incurred and so ceasing to be the bugbear that fixed charges must always be to the householder of moderate income.

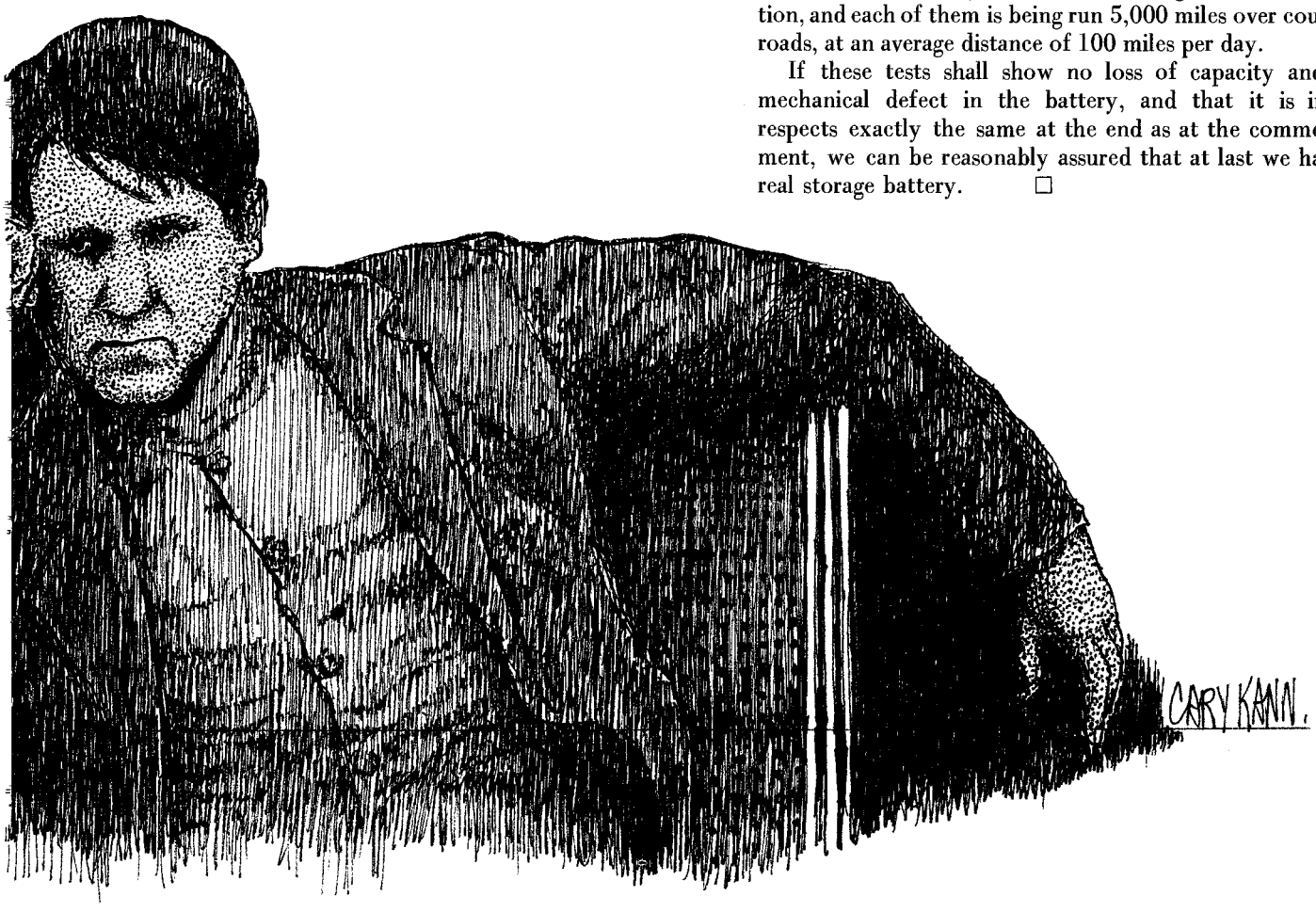
For safe and successful use, the automobile must, in my opinion, be made with heavier running gear, on the lines of the later French automobiles. Especially should stability be secured in the wheels and frame; the superstructure may be made gauzy. It seems likely that two general types of electric carriage will be developed, a light buggy type and a heavier touring carriage, the battery varying accordingly.

The French types of electric carriages come nearer to my ideas in strength and stability than any other models. This result has been attained, of course, only by experience. At first I was inclined to the opinion that the French machines were abnormally heavy; but when I study out the concussions and strains to which they are subjected, my inclination is to make the touring carriage even heavier still. It is surprising to me that American builders have not more closely followed these French models, since experiments costing millions must have been made to reach the present stage.

We hear of fewer automobile accidents in France and in Europe generally than in our own country, and they are fewer in spite of heavy types of carriages. One reason for this is that in Europe there are wider roads and less traffic; another is that the public have been educated up to the situation. The electric carriage of the future, and of the near future, will in my opinion not only supersede other types of automobiles, but it will be built and run on such practical lines that accidents will soon become things of the past. Horse owners and drivers will educate their animals, as in old times they had to be educated up to the steam engine and later to the trolley car. The electric carriage will be practically noiseless and easily stopped in an emergency. Above all, it will need no irresponsible chauffeur.

The fifth endurance test of the nickel-iron battery, which is demonstrating that the storage battery is indeed an accomplished fact, is now being made with five different models of automobiles, in each of which the new cells have been installed. They are of various weights and construction, and each of them is being run 5,000 miles over country roads, at an average distance of 100 miles per day.

If these tests shall show no loss of capacity and no mechanical defect in the battery, and that it is in all respects exactly the same at the end as at the commencement, we can be reasonably assured that at last we have a real storage battery. □



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Fiction by Chester Aaron

Hold Your Breath!

Many patients refuse to ease their anxiety until the last moment. They wait until the end of the week to schedule their examinations. That's one reason Fridays are usually hectic in the X-ray Department. But today, Friday, is unusually quiet.

At Piedmont Hospital, on a Friday, forty patients is a normal load, with about six of those being fluoroscopies, examinations of stomachs or lower bowels. This morning we had only four fluoros. For the rest of the day, from eight o'clock, when the department opened, until six this evening, when the department closes and Roddy takes over on Emergency Call, we'll probably end up with less than thirty patients.

We'd heard that there had been some trouble in San Francisco. Students from U.C. had been picketing the Federal Building, protesting the appearance of the House un-American Activities Committee, and there'd been fighting between police and students. But apparently there'd not been many casualties, or they'd all been cared for at Peabody and the University Clinic.

Whenever they occur, the unpredicted fluctuations in patient-load create anxious tensions among the radiologists, the physicians whose income depends on the number of examinations performed each month. A reduced patient load means a reduced monthly income. Employees who, for the first time in weeks, can relax by not running all day, have to be, due to their self-indulgent contempt for the "team", responsible. At least it's an explanation. They have to be responsible and penalized.

Roddy has been Chief Tech at two hospitals before he came to Piedmont. He's been here six years. He has learned to anticipate not the fluctuations of patient-load but the quiet panic that accompanies a decline, that underrides a radiologist's conviction that his practice is doomed to permanent failure and he is doomed to permanent poverty. To protect himself as well as to ease the fears of the radiologists, Roddy spends much of the day searching for chores that can give the impression the technicians are dedicated and conscientious employees. Cassettes are cleaned, even though they might have been cleaned the day before. The plastic faces of the illuminators are washed. Nooks and crannies and ridges and furrows on the X-ray tables are picked clean of solidified barium, then scrubbed with alcohol. Cupboards are emptied of crumpled cups, dull needles, cracked syringes, crystallized dyes. Inventory is taken of every shelf in every cabinet and the contents neatly rearranged. Foam rubber supports of various shapes and sizes, to be used for immobilization of bones and muscles, and sheets of lead rubber (used to mask cardboard film-holders as well as to protect ovaries and testicles) are collected and distributed equally among the three rooms.

When it is finally impossible to find or concoct another job, Roddy sends two people at a time on long coffee breaks, so they'll be out of sight and out of mind, should Dr. Porter or Dr. Ackerman come into the work area from their office. All but two of the remaining employees hide in the Dark Room or in one of the three toilets, reading magazines or writing letters.

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Because there is little likelihood there will be a run of patients, Roddy lets each person go home a half hour earlier than they would normally. They leave quietly, by the back door, without calling good-bye. Roddy, working from nine to five, goes on call at six. I suggest he go home at four-thirty, so he can have a relaxed dinner with his wife and kids before he goes on call. My shift this month is ten to six, so I'm not doing him any special favor.

About ten minutes after he leaves I join Patsy, the receptionist, at the front desk. Because all of the dictation was completed by the radiologists an hour before, and all the typing completed by Annie a half hour after that, Annie has also gone. Patsy complains that she never gets to go home early. She drops cigarette ashes and drips Coke onto the classified ads of the Oakland *Tribune*, and mumbles as she reads that if she could find a good job she'd leave tomorrow. Without any notice? Oh, maybe ten of fifteen minutes.

The phone rings and Patsy hands it to me. "Surgery. They want to talk to a tech."

"X-ray, Ben Kahn. May I help you?"

"Benjamin, heart of hearts. Blossom here. Dr. Horne's doing an emer . . ."

"Horne? Oh, no."

"Oh, yes. An emergency cholecystectomy. He wants pictures like five minutes ago."

"Well, tell that old bastard, J-for-Justinian Horne, I'll . . ."

"Benjamin, the little old gall bladder's out and on its way to the rogue's gallery. Dr. J-for-Justinian Horne is just killing, if you'll excuse the expression, time. Waiting for you."

"Why didn't we know before this? So we could be ready."

"Because, Benjamin, things are, as they say in French, sort of fucked up. Have you ever known us not to be when we try to get everything correct, just once, for J-for-Justinian?"

"I have to get the equipment together. Then I have to goose that elevator. Then, after I get up there I have to change clothes."

"I just heard his gentle voice screaming, 'Get that technician's ass up here', Benjamin."

"Tell him he can kiss my I'm-on-my-way-up."

"How soon?"

"Oh, let's see. Ten's a good number. Tell him ten minutes."

I collect several film hangers, two grid cassettes, a special light-proof container filled with X-ray film and a lead apron. I dump everything into the storage box of the Picker portable and wheel the portable down the hall and onto the elevator. If any patients come in now, I tell Patsy, they'll have to wait until I'm through in Surgery or until Roddy comes on duty at six. Whichever comes first.

After the solid iron door of the elevator slides closed, and then the iron grating, I push the 6 button. The elevator shakes and hums, makes two false starts, shakes again, hums again at a higher pitch and then jerks upward. It travels upward about three inches and then returns, with a sigh, to its base. I push the button again and the elevator lifts with a start that takes my breath away. It shoots up to the second floor, slows, stops, drifts back, and then renews its upward movement, to finally reach the sixth floor.

The small gray room that was once a bedroom for one of the servants and now serves as the doctors' lounge, looks like a slaughter house rest room. Blood smeared cotton trousers and blouses are scattered about the floor as if they'd been used to soak up a hundred leaks of red oil. All day they've been walked on, kicked aside, tripped over, but no one's picked up a single piece. The metal container intended for the storage of used linen is empty, though it's surrounded with a mound of towels and gowns and masks and caps and trousers and blouses, all green, almost all of them dotted or spotted or soaked with blood. The shelves on the west wall have numbers painted on them, indicating the sizes of the assorted items that had, early that morning, been neatly stacked. But after an entire day of probing and picking, most of the shelves and numbers are obliterated by hanging sleeves and strings and trouser legs. The doors on at least half of the twenty olive drab army surplus lockers lining the east wall stand open, their hinges or locks out of order since before I came to work at Piedmont.

There is a single small desk at the window, through which I can see directly into the dark redwood grove, limbs of which, were I to open the window, I could reach out and touch. A tattered copy of one of the two periodicals in the room lies on top of the desk. It is the November, 1950, issue of *Esquire*. The other, on the floor under a wooden bench near the entry to the toilet and shower, is a July, 1951, issue of *Esquire*.

I flip the switch on the intercom sitting on the desk. "Anyone home?"

"That you, Ben?"

"Me, Ben. You, Blossom. Be there as soon as I change clothes. Which room?"

"Room 3. And Ben . . ."

"Yeah?"

"Please get it on the first shot. Dr. Horne's in one hell of a mood."

"What else is new?"

I store my street clothes in one of the few lockers still functioning, draw on a pair of green cotton trousers that are too small and a green blouse that is too large, cover my shoes with cloth booties (taking time to tuck the ends of the conductive rubber strips into the backs of my shoes,) and pull a cotton cap and mask from their boxes.

The usual nightly clutter fills the main corridor. A mountain range of trays and instrument packs, some still warm from the recent autoclaving, stretch from one end of the corridor to the other, covering the surfaces of five or six flat guerneys and carts. Before the morning shift arrives the guerneys and carts, empty, will be out of the corridor, back in Central Supply, and the packs and trays will be stored on the shelves of the various cupboards scattered among the four operating rooms. Tomorrow night the corridor will again be impassable, jammed like thousands of other corridors in thousands of other Surgeries across the land, jammed with packs and trays of a thousand different instruments designed to probe and slice and tear and repair and measure hundreds of thousands of anonymous bowels

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and femurs and lungs and arteries and mandibles and livers and hearts. Tonight, across the land, hundreds of tons of once virile bones and organs will be stored in bottles or burned in furnaces and tomorrow night hundreds of tons more, of once virile organs and bones, will be added to the storage. Or also burned.

Two rooms open off of each side of the corridor. All but one, Room 3, are dark. Like the X-ray Department, the Surgery at Piedmont Hospital is neither equipped nor staffed for massive night-time surgery. Even one a night tests the durability of the department.

I fit my mask in place, tie the strings behind my head, and enter the room. Dr. Cody, the anesthetist, puts his hand to his nose and waves his fingers. "Hi, there, Benjamin, you a professor yet?"

Blossom, standing behind Dr. Cody, is massaging his shoulders. "You stop teasing Benjamin," she says.

I raise my hand and, for the benefit only of Dr. Cody, I lift the middle finger and thrust it upward.

"Oh," Blossom says, pretending to be shocked, "I saw that."

Moving close to the table, joining the cluster of green-capped, green-gowned, brown-gloved, white-masked workers, I'm careful not to trespass on the sterile area. It's marked with invisible borders but we all know its precise limits. The overhead lights, sliding in ceiling tracks and positioned to direct their brilliant but muted glare at a small fragment of the humped mass on the table, are shifted an inch to the left, an inch back, tilted and shifted again. The green cotton drapes, spread like a collapsed circus tent over the mass I know to be the patient, absorb and even soften the glare. I have to stand on tiptoe to see, sloping in and down from the green linen, a crater of glistening yellow fat, the reservoir of red black fluid at the bottom of the crater concealing most of the anterior bowel. Coils of wrinkled, golden, glistening fat, veined and dotted with bright red blood, work their way up the slopes of the crater and spill over the lips, restrained from slithering back down by ten or twenty steel clamps and hemostats.

Dr. Horne jerks his head up. He blinks through his freckled glasses. "Ben."

"Yes sir?"

"One film. Just one."

"I can't promise, Dr. Horne."

"What the hell do you mean you can't promise? I only want one film."

"Dr. Horne, he's so damned big . . ."

"He's a she," Dr. Cody says. "And she weighs a few pounds over two hundred."

"How few?"

Dr. Cody flips to the last page of his chart. "About eighty few."

"Have we dispensed with the amenities, gentlemen?" Dr. Horne's voice fails to reach its normal daytime cutting edge. "If so, may we continue with the X-rays? Or should we leave the patient and go downstairs and take a coffee break?"

"I'll be ready in three minutes," I promise.

I roll the Picker portable into the room and plug it into the wall socket. Before I move the portable into position over the table I ask Irene St. Cloud, the scrub-tech, to drape the patient. She places one and then two and then three cotton towels over the open abdomen so the possibilities for contamination, when I move the X-ray tube over the abdomen, will be reduced. Normally one towel is enough, but even with three there is a small patch of flesh that remains exposed. When Irene spreads a fourth towel, Dr. Gallagher, Dr. Horne's assistant, clucks his tongue. "Like trying to spread a tarp over the Grand Canyon."

Dr. Horne bends his knees as I edge the portable forward. I stop it when the flared lead cone protruding from the tube is over the area I estimate to be the location of the bile ducts. The mound of the abdomen is so high its green surface is less than an inch, less than a half inch, from the cone's black rim. Dr. Horne bends lower, so he is looking directly across the abdomen and through the half inch of open space, at my face. "How in God's name am I going to be able to get in there to inject?"

"I don't know, sir. But the machine has to be there to take the picture."

"OK, OK, get on with it. I'll manage."

I turn on the switch to see if the portable's working and to make sure the ancient wires in the walls are supplying enough current to support the portable. The needles swing into position. The fluctuation in the line voltage could be worse. I decide to wait until everything is ready before I set the technique. It would be impractical to set a technique now, and then, when I'm ready to shoot, find the line voltage so altered the technique will have to be completely changed.

Inside the Dark Room, a former broom closet, is a master tank filled with water. Two smaller tanks sit in the water, one filled with developer, the other with fixer. They've not been used for several days so I add replenisher to both. The thermometer reads seventy degrees. An increase in the flow of cold water will reduce the temperature.

Back in Room 3, with one of the grid cassettes in my hand, I advise Dr. Horne that he shouldn't expect the film to have too much detail. "With this portable, and the line fluctuations, and the size of the patient . . ."

"Ben," Dr. Cody says, "save your excuses for after we see your lousy film." He grins then, as always, to defuse his nastiness.

"You mind backing up, Doctor, so I can get the tray out?"

Dr. Cody winks and rolls his chair backward, away from the end of the table.

The tray, a special long handled shovel Roddy and I designed, slides on tracks inside a wooden tunnel. If films are required during surgery the tunnel is always placed on top of the operating table but beneath the patient's mattress. To locate the handle of the tray, so I can pull it out and load it with the cassette, I stoop and lift the ends of the drapes that hang over the table and almost to the floor. The handle of the shovel's not visible. I tug at the drapes in an effort to locate the shovel and discover there is no shovel. There is not even a tunnel.

I back out from beneath the drapes. "Dr. Horne." I remain on my knees, a safe position to be in when lightning strikes. "Bad news."

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Dr. Horne stares at me for five or six seconds and then, with mock caution, he deposits his syringe on the draped abdomen, safely out of range of the flared cone. He waits.

"There's no tunnel. Without a tunnel I'll never get a cassette under her."

A large wall fan, which is reputed to blow more foul air into the room than it takes out, gives off a heavy asthmatic hum. Except for that hum, and the sharp, pained gasp from Miss Tanaka, the circulating nurse, the silence is ominous.

Dr. Horne clasps his blood-smeared, rubber-gloved hands to his chest. He peers over the top of the glasses taped to the bridge of his nose so they won't drop into the hole he's excavated in the patient's abdomen. "No tunnel," he repeats.

"That's right."

Dr. Horne directs a casual glance at Miss Tanaka. He shrugs as if it doesn't matter. "No tunnel," he says.

Miss Tanaka makes several unsuccessful efforts to speak and then turns to Dr. Cody, who holds up both hands, fingers spread. "Don't look at me," he says. "I didn't set up the room."

"The anesthetist," Dr. Horne says, his voice still calm, "is really in command of an operating room, isn't that correct, Doctor?"

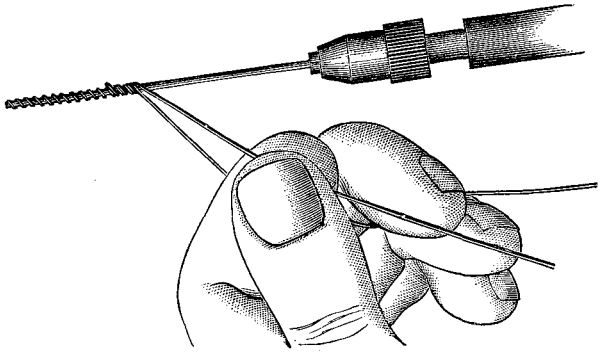
"It's . . . I guess it's my fault," Miss Tanaka volunteers. "I'm sorry. I didn't think about your wanting films. It was an emergency . . . no written orders . . . for X-rays, I mean . . . I just didn't think that . . ."

"Miss Tanaka, what is this procedure we're performing on this seventeenth day of November in the one thousand nine hundred and sixty-first year of our Lord, Jesus Christ?"

"A . . . a cholecystectomy, sir."

"And in a cholecystectomy, isn't the placement of that tunnel, for the possible, I say *possible*, use of X-rays, an accepted part of setting up the room?"

Miss Tanaka tries to speak but ends up biting her pouting red lips. She nods.



Dr. Horne unclasps his hands, spreads them in a plaintive appeal, and then, slamming them together, shouts, "THEN WHY IN THE HELL," and his voice drops to a whisper, "wasn't a tunnel put under this patient?"

Miss Tanaka, driven back by the blast of his voice, stumbles over a wire on the floor. She falls against the wall and then, sobbing, runs from the room.

Dr. Horne raises his eyes toward the ceiling. "Why, oh Lord God of Hosts, do you persist in surrounding me with incompetents?" When he receives no response he lowers his head, steps down from his stool, and walks across the room, to contemplate the tray of instruments. He turns and walks to the opposite end of the room where, on the illuminator, are three small films of a gall bladder, a sack filled with what looks like grapeshot.

Back at the table, on the stool again, Dr. Horne peers down at the towels protecting the cavity, mumbling as if he's taking inventory of the organs. "Suck that muck out of there," he tells Dr. Gallagher.

Dr. Gallagher, chuckling, dips the tip of the suction device into the pool. After a series of gurgles all of the fluid is transferred to the jug under the table.

"We'll have to lift her," Dr. Horne says.

"Lif . . . lift her?" Dr. Gallagher repeats. "She weighs . . ."

"I know what she weighs, Goddamn it. The woman's my patient. My responsibility. That just happens to be one of the reasons I'm concerned. I want to know, *before* I sew her up, if those ducts are clear. I don't want her coming back next week and going through all this a second time. Call the orderlies in. We'll need three or four."

Dr. Cody, who's been busy checking the pulse, taking upper chest soundings, writing in his chart, pulls his stethescope free of his ears. "Pardon?"

"Call three or four orderlies in."

"Orderlies? Why?"

Dr. Horne enunciates each word separately and distinctly. "Because . . . we . . . are . . . going . . . to . . . lift . . . this . . . patient. That's why. And while she's levitating, Ben's going to slide the cassette underneath her."

"Jay, she's wide open. We lift her and let her sag she'll crack like a watermelon . . ."

"Dr. Cody."

"I tend to agree with Dr. Cody."

Dr. Horne points a stubby red finger at Dr. Gallagher's once white mask and the snub nose above it. "I don't give a fat turd what you *tend*. You're my assistant, not my instructor or my director. Do you mind?"

Dr. Gallagher's chuckles are muffled by his mask. "Don't mind a bit, Jay. Like you say, she's your patient. And I say, thank God."

"Call the orderlies."

Dr. Cody rises from his stool. "I have to protest . . ."

Dr. Horne's red fist darts down, grabs a fistful of instruments from the tray between him and Irene St. Cloud and hurls them all against the wall. Two bounce into a recently opened tray of sterile sponges. Of formerly sterile sponges. "You may protest all the way up to Jesus Christ Almighty!" Dr. Horne shouts. "*After* this surgery's completed. I know the risks. That's why I'm taking them. Now, are you going to call those orderlies or do I?"

Dr. Cody goes to the door, sticks his head out and says, "Kyoko, get Floyd and see if there's another orderly on the floors. Tell them to change clothes and get up here. Fast."

"We'll need three orderlies. I *said* three."

"Jay, this is not the University hospital or Alameda

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County Hospital. We're lucky to have one orderly. At the most, two." Dr. Cody calls, "Kyoko, get three men if you can. Orderlies, doctors, janitor, engineers, it doesn't matter. As long as they're weight-lifters."

Everyone stands where they are and they wait. Two minutes, three, four. Dr. Cody, grinning, says, three times, into his chart, "Incredible." When Miss Tanaka returns, the scrub-nurse calls her over, murmurs something in her ear and Miss Tanaka lifts the tray of sponges contaminated by the instruments that had glanced off the wall. Miss St. Cloud, with a towel wrapped carefully about her hand so her glove is not contaminated, wipes the tears from Miss Tanaka's eyes and drops the green towel to the floor. Miss Tanaka, unable to control her sobs, picks up the towel and carries it, along with the sponges, out of the room.

Dr. Horne watches me pull the portable machine away from the table. "Now, what in the hell are you doing? Are you leaving?"

"No sir. When we lift her, if the tube's over her, that cone's liable to fall down inside her. I don't think you'd appreciate that."

Dr. Horne points his syringe at me. "This is not the place or time for humor."

The door opens and three black men enter. They're wearing surgery greens and white caps and masks. Two of them seem ill at ease in both their clothes and the surroundings. The third guides them, telling them where to walk, what not to touch, how to breathe if they feel themselves getting sick. Miss Tanaka rips the tape from a sterile pack and slaps the strips of tape onto the front of her green uniform. With quick, expert moves she unfolds the flaps of the pack so Irene St. Cloud can safely remove each gown.

Once the orderlies are gloved and gowned they position themselves as Dr. Horne directs them, one to his right, near the patient's knees and one at each shoulder of the patient. Dr. Gallagher is placed directly across from him, at the patient's hips.

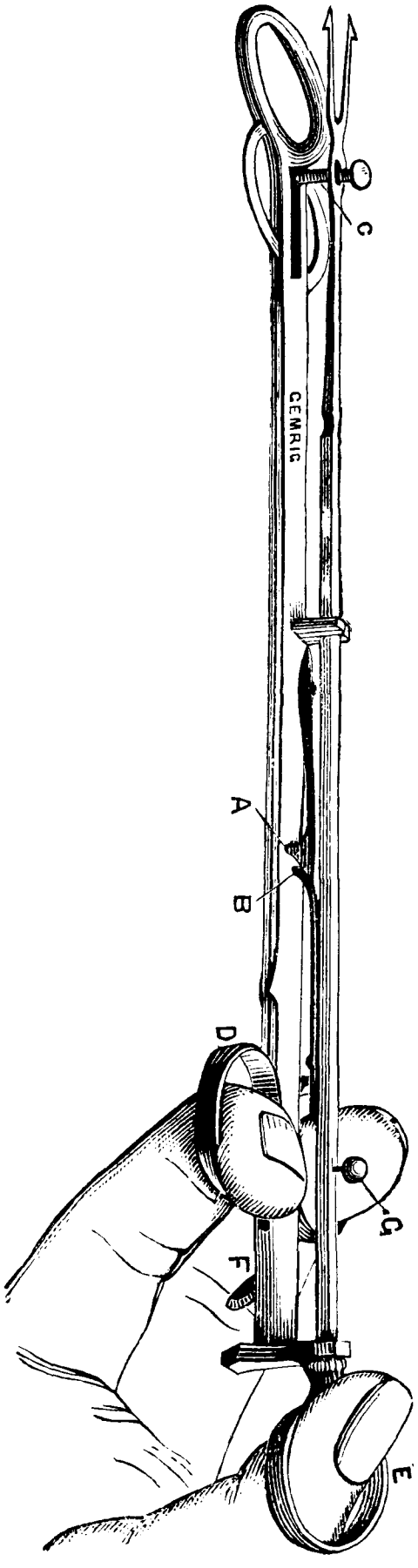
"Ben, when we lift her up, you get the film under her. Fast. We'll hold her up until you say it's OK. You three fellows, we have to lift straight up and we have to lift together. Don't let the head or the feet sag. When you work your hands under her, to lift her, reach *clear* under, until you feel the other man's hands. Now, let's all find this sheet. This white one. It's the last sterile sheet above the mattress. We have to stay on *top* of that sheet. Find it? Everyone got it? OK. Ready?"

"Wait. Don't lift yet. I have to get under the table." Clutching the grid cassette, I get down on my knees.

"Tanaka, you better get under there with Ben in case he needs help."

Kyoko and I crawl under the drapes. The light, filtered through the soft green cotton, helps camouflage the pools of blood and the various instruments that have fallen or been intentionally dropped during the course of the surgery. When my knee presses on one of the instruments I cry out and knock the instruments skidding across the floor. My other knee slides in a pool of blood and I almost fall.

While Kyoko picks up the instruments, or flips them



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aside, I roll away the jug into which blood and other fluids have been draining. Beneath the table, feeling and looking like a fish in an aquarium, I ask Dr. Horne to set his right foot in line with the bile ducts and to try to keep it there so I'll be sure to position the cassette correctly. He does. He then says, "OK, we're about ready to lift up here. You ready, Ben?"

"I'm ready."

"OK, men. When I say *lift*, everyone lift together. Slow. Gentle. But together. Everyone ready?"

"Ready . . . I'm ready . . . ready, sir."

"OK, lift."

When I try to wedge the cassette beneath the mattress I discover several of the drapes entangled along the entire length of the table.

"Ben, for Chrissake, get that film in. You, at the legs, lower. More. Don't bend her body. You, raise up a bit. Hurry, Ben."

Kyoko has been struggling to loosen the drapes but I shove the cassette at her and she holds it to her chest, kneeling and swaying back and forth, moaning, muttering in Japanese, while I tear at the cloth, fighting to open just the twelve inches I'll need for the cassette. Then, as Kyoko shifts to give me more room, her knee, in a pool of blood, slides out from under her. It strikes my knees and I fall to my right, feeling the wetness soaking through to my skin. In my panic to hurry to my knees I slide again and fall face down, my forehead striking the floor, my right foot sending the jug crashing against a table leg. The jug breaks into two perfect halves and the contents, about two quarts of mixed saline and blood and other exotic juices, pour across the floor.

"What in the purple living hell is going on down there?" Dr. Horne's voice, pitched high, is strained through a filter of exhaustion, exertion, and fury. "What in the hell, Goddamn it? . . ."

The green light is converted to bright fluorescence as the drapes are lifted. The masked face of Dr. Cody appears. He starts to ask his own questions but, instead, he bursts into laughter. His efforts to control himself expand his laughter into shouts. He falls, or drops, to sit on the floor. Hysterical, covering his face as he sits in the red pool, he unwittingly fits two perfect red handprints on his mask.

In my own rage I leap to my knees, only to strike my head on the underside of the table and, again, to fall flat. This time on my back.

Groggy, my head aching, I pick away at the linen and finally succeed in freeing the mattress. I accept the cassette from Kyoko, who has managed somehow to save it from the flood. I shove the cassette in place, keeping an eye on Dr. Horne's foot. I lean back, gauge the location of the foot and the location of the cassette to be in line, and I shout, "Let her down." Realizing I've screamed the words, I repeat, quietly, "Let her down."

Kyoko, exhausted, sobbing, collapses. She lies flat on her back, at the feet of Dr. Cody, who is finally—all the while clutching his stomach—managing to reduce his laughter to groans and a few incomprehensible words. Still on her back, Kyoko rolls her head from side to side as she continues to weep.

"Easy, easy," Dr. Horne is saying in the sane world above. "Easy. There. OK. She's down. But we're all contaminated. We'll all need new gowns and gloves."

Kyoko and I help each other crawl and slide from beneath the table. Wiping her eyes (and smearing red across her forehead and her white mask) she reaches down to help me help Dr. Cody to his feet. He stands but remains bent over, clutching at his stomach.

Dr. Horne's eyes shift from Dr. Cody to me to Kyoko. As Dr. Cody, still bent over, still holding his abdomen, returns to his stool at the end of the table, Dr. Horne clears his throat. His voice is hoarse, so hoarse and tremulous it is almost incomprehensible. "I have never . . . in all my thirty-five years of practice I have never had such a wretched experience. This is medicine, is it, this is contemporary American medicine? This place . . . By God, this place has to change. I've resisted modernizing, I felt we had all we needed here, but by God there comes a time . . . oh, hell. What's the use? Prepare for the injection. Ben, get that monstrosity ready to take a film."

Soaked to the skin, shivering, the wet cotton chafing my thighs, I move the portable unit forward. I wait until St. Cloud lays the four green towels in place again. Because the abdomen beneath the drapes and the towels is so huge, so amorphous, it is impossible to identify any anatomical landmark. I use as a guide the depression under the towels and the clumps of what can only be hemostats growing up out of the tissue, keeping the towels from dropping into the depths.

After shifting the portable back and forth I get it in place. I project an imaginary line from the center of the flared cone. It strikes where I imagine, or hope, the bile ducts are located in that mountain of flesh. "How's that look for position, Dr. Horne?"

Dr. Horne lifts the edge of the center towel, stoops, checks the position of the cone, gestures for me to glide the portable forward and then an inch to the left. "Stop."

After locking the machine in place, I try to organize my thoughts. I compose a technique that should produce a fairly diagnostic film of the abdomen of a flabby two-hundred-eighty-pound patient. It is, however, a technique I'd use in the X-ray Department downstairs, where the conditions are better, where I'd have ten times the power I have available to me here. I make what I hope are appropriate adjustments.

The maximum kilovoltage I can get out of the portable is seventy-five. Because my milliamperage is low (twenty-five, if I'm lucky) the exposure will have to be repeated three or four times, four to six seconds for each exposure. With the line voltage coming to the machine out of the wall fluctuating every few seconds I won't be getting even seventy five KV or twenty five mills the entire length of each exposure. Dr. Cody is recovered now so he'll be able to control the patient's breathing. The four to six second exposures being repeated three or four times means he'll have to stop her breathing for about twenty to thirty seconds. Maybe thirty-five. I wonder if seventy-five KV will penetrate that mass of flesh. Well, I have no choice.

"Are you ready, Ben?"

"Almost." I glance at the table for one final review. In

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that sea of rubber gloves and gleaming instruments the body floats, suspended, like a great green island.

"Jesus H. Christ, Ben . . ."

"All right, I'm ready. As ready as I'll ever be."

The orderlies and Kyoko rush out of the room and Dr. Gallagher and Irene St. Cloud go to the farthest corner, theoretically out of reach of the radiation. Dr. Cody takes a lead apron from the back of his stool and spreads it over his lap and lower abdomen. I pull on the apron I brought from the Department and let it hang free from my shoulders.

"Dr. Cody, don't forget. When Dr. Horne starts injecting be sure to stop her breathing."

"For how long?"

"About, oh, twenty five seconds."

"Aw, come on, Ben . . ."

"I'm injecting."

One final glance at the control panel. I wish I could get more KV. I start the rotor, knowing I need and have about three seconds before I have to shoot.

"SHOOT!"

While I keep the pressure on the trigger I also keep a close eye on the various meters on the panel to be sure I'm receiving the approximate kilovoltage and amperage. The needles return to zero after six seconds. "Don't let her breathe yet. I'm shooting again."

I pull the trigger again, hoping that the multiple exposures, at such a low KV, will increase my chances for producing a film of even moderate quality. If Dr. Horne can see even a faint image of the bile ducts he'll be satisfied.

The needle returns to zero. "Once more." On impulse, I increase the time to seven seconds and shoot again, wondering, during those seven seconds, if there is anything I've not thought of that might help me. Nothing. If I were a praying man I'd only have prayer to help me now.

The orderlies and Kyoko promptly return to the room and begin pulling on sterile gowns and gloves. While they all prepare for the lift, Kyoko and I, once more, crawl beneath the table. The patient is lifted, the cassette is removed, both Kyoko and I stand. The entire performance proceeds with ease and speed.

"Goddamn it, Ben. Goddamn it to hell, why didn't things go that smoothly the first time? Don't bother, don't bother. Just develop the film. Hurry."

Inside the Dark Room, with the door closed, I fall back against the wall. Since I'll be sight-developing the films my eyes will have to be adapted to the red-tinted darkness. My entire body, including my fingers and ear lobes, is wet and cold and trembling. I can smell the blood that has begun to mat my hair, coagulate on my skin. I can almost taste it. Ignoring Dr. Horne's insistence that I hurry, I take the time to calm down. Closing my eyes, I concentrate on three deep breaths. A Yoga technique I read about somewhere. It seems to work.

When my hands are washed free of the blood (I dip my hands in the tank several times, and then splash my face) I dry my face on the towel hanging from a hook on the inside of the door. I dry my hands more carefully, finger by finger. When I can read the print on the ends of the film boxes stored on the overhead shelves, I know my eyes are adapted. I open the cassette, slip out the film, clip it onto the hanger and lower the film into the tank of developer. I work the film up and down to activate the chemicals.

After ten or twenty seconds I realize that I'd forgotten to set the timer, so I count to myself, starting at fifteen. When I reach sixty I hold my breath and slowly withdraw the film, tilting it slightly to see the image better against the glow of the safety light.

"Good God"

I speak the words aloud, astonished, but I repeat them with glee. I tilt back my head and laugh. What have I done to deserve such luck? The bile ducts, filled with the opaque solution Dr. Horne had injected, are sharp and white against the dark background. And in the exact center of the film. Technically, aesthetically, a near perfect film.

One more minute in the developer can only improve the detail. I continue working the film up and down, through a second count of sixty. Then I dip the film twice in the clean, swirling water and then into the fixer.

Done. I wait for another minute so the image will be fixed before it's struck by light. When I open the door the assorted statues roll their eyes, following me as I go to the wall and prepare to hold the film against the illuminator. Dr. Horne comes up behind me. Kyoko springs into action, removing the old films of the gall bladder. I raise my film and hold it against the light.

"I don't believe it," Dr. Cody says.

Dr. Horne mumbles something I don't understand and he takes a step backward. His knees buckle. He staggers to his left but the wall keeps him from going down.

Dr. Cody leaps up. "Are you OK, Jay?"

Dr. Horne, pushing himself from the wall and regaining his balance, waves Dr. Cody aside.

"It looks good to me from here," Dr. Gallagher says. "You want to go and lie down? I can close her. You've been going steady since eight this morning, Jay."

Dr. Horne shakes his balding gray head. "You'd probably use a hammer and rusty nails." Dr. Horne studies the films, turns to me, nods once. "Ben, I sincerely thank you. I honestly didn't expect even a lousy film. This helps. Go home."

Blossom, in the corridor, slips her arm through mine. "I'm sorry we screwed up on that tunnel, Ben."

It's almost six-thirty. I'm to be at the home of friends tonight, to meet a woman, at eight. Right now the prospect of meeting a woman has no appeal for me. All I want to do is to get out of these wet, bloody greens, to shower, to rest.

As I enter the Doctors' Lounge I think about the film. I'm almost giddy as I recall the picture of those perfectly demonstrated bile ducts. As I made those adjustments and rapid readjustments in the technique, I was acting on knowledge accumulated over the past eight years. Not knowledge to use in the writing of a paper on some abstract philosophical concept or knowledge that, in tying the past to the present, will enrich my perception of a novel or a piece of music, but knowledge to be used to help another human being who is ill or in pain. That huge woman whose flesh had been spread out like a slab of flank steak on a meat-market counter would never know me. I'd probably never

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want to know her. But we are bound together with as real and as potent a bond as any bond arrived at in those mythic rituals where Cherokee or Sioux or Apache joined slashed palms to mingle blood and form an eternal brotherhood.

I sit on the wooden bench. The small shower next to the toilet has a 3 x 5 card taped to the outside wall. TO BE USED BY MEDICAL STAFF ONLY.

As the warm water washes the soap from my body, the image waiting in the wings of my mind, the image of those bile ducts persists. And the image of the gall bladder that had once been attached.

All the while I'd been working in that operating room, setting and altering techniques on the control panel, I'd been seeing an anonymous organ labeled *gall bladder*, and some small branched tubes labeled *biliary ducts*. I'd estimated distance and kilovoltage and milliamperage and seconds to produce a perfect image on an eleven inch long and fourteen inch wide piece of celluloid without considering that those ducts and that gall bladder belonged to that lard-assed human being asleep on that merciless table under those merciless lights exposed to a crowd of detached and unconcerned eyes, cut and probed and pieced together again by hands that might just as well have been wrenches or pliers or screw drivers.

The object of my success, the reason I swam in that puddle of gore, had been to produce, ultimately, a film of a biliary duct. Not a film of a man or a woman or a child but a film of some ambiguous, ephemeral organ I'd never seen and will never want to see. The woman, the body, the container, might just as well have been a box or a basket, so devoid had she been, for me, of humanity.

I stand in the shower, thinking that after eight years I'm well on my way to becoming one of those machined automatons that crowd the halls and rooms and offices and clinics of every hospital in the country. I've seen them—doctors, nurses, technicians, clerks, administrators—the people of so-called good intentions who perform with such routine contempt they might just as well be working on an assembly line in an auto plant. How many times I've vowed that *I* would never permit myself to be converted from man to machine. But I've come to accept the X-ray jargon so casually that humanity, individuality, has slipped away from the patients I work with. To all techs, including me, a patient is no longer a face, a voice, a person; a patient is no longer even a name. To me and to all other techs and clerks, especially to the radiologists (who rarely see or touch a patient, who see only a negative film of the pieces of the patient's anatomy), the patient is a *foot* or a *chest* or a *skull*. Or a *biliary duct*. Or a *cholecystectomy*.

At the desk near the window, I ask, through the intercom, "Blossom, what was her name?"

"Whose name, Ben?"

"The patient's."

"Oh, I already sent the slip with all the information on it to X-ray."

"I know, but what's her name?"

"OK, it's Mrs. . . . wait a minute . . . here. It's Mrs. Frieda Hawthorne. You know her?"

"No. I just wanted to know her name."

I don't feel like going back to my apartment to cook. The electric heater doesn't work, the apartment's cold, the sink's full of dishes and there's nothing in the refrigerator except some eggs and maybe a few wilted stalks of celery. I'll have supper at the cafeteria.

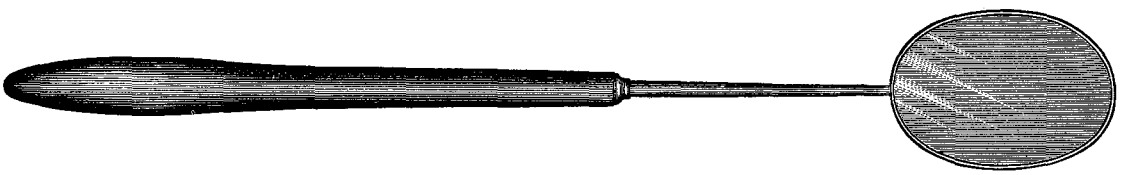
I'm halfway through my piece of apple pie when Dr. Horne enters. He looks around, sees me, and comes to my table. He shifts on his feet like a penitent school child. "You want to finish your paper or may I join you?"

I push the Oakland *Tribune* aside. "Please join me."

While Dr. Horne moves through the tray line I refill my coffee cup. I like the cafeteria at this time of day. I'm through work, the nurses and aides and LVNs on their breaks are still fresh, neither their faces nor their uniforms dulled yet by the demands of their work. Evening, and especially night workers in a hospital, share a unique camaraderie. They're compelled to rely more, sometimes exclusively, on their own skills. Free of hovering administrators, they can afford to be informal, with each other as well as with patients, removing their sanctified caps, wearing red or blue instead of pure white sweaters, ignoring rules that restrict visitors, even occasionally smoking at the nurses' station. The wards are tense but quiet after the visitors depart and the patients are asleep. There are fewer doctors to cater and defer to, no maids or janitors emptying waste baskets or vacuuming carpets, no automobiles outside, no pounding of construction machinery from other parts of the city. The shock of a sudden death is not to be diluted by sharing with physicians, technicians, clerks.

When I'm in the hospital at night or on the weekends I share this tension, I'm a member of this group.

Dr. Horne transfers his dishes from the tray to the table with great care and then deposits the tray on the stand near the cash register. He sits, removes his glasses, rubs his eyes,



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shakes his head, returns his glasses, and blinks to clear and settle his vision. "That," he says, as he considers his bowl of steaming vegetable soup, "was an absolute disgrace up there." After two experimental sips of the soup he pushes the bowl away, to the front and then to the right, as if he were moving the knight on his chess board. "Every day I get out of bed and just wait for something like that to happen. It always does. Sooner or later. If the Accreditation Committee of the American Hospital Association had seen that performance we'd be closed down by now."

"I felt sorry for Kyoko."

Dr. Horne pretends to rub his forehead but he is actually covering his eyes to, I think, hide his embarrassment. He tries a small sampling of cole slaw, chews, swallows, pushes the bowl forward and to the left. "I'll apologize to the poor girl. But Goddamn it, Ben, we were in trouble." He considers the sandwich with a not very hopeful eye. "That woman, Mrs. Hawthorne, the woman you X-rayed. Two years ago I removed damn near half her gut. Cancer. Ever since I knew I was going to have to go in there after that gall bladder I've been scared. I didn't know what I'd find. Last three nights I didn't sleep more than seven hours total. OK, I went in, she looked clean. But what if I had to go back in, a couple months from now, or a year, because I didn't get those ducts cleaned? I want to keep her out of surgery for as long as I can. For her sake as well as mine. What a way to earn a living."

After a bite of the sandwich, and then a tentative second bite, the sandwich is castled, ending up at the right of Dr. Horne, replaced by his cup of coffee. "You married, Ben?"

"No."

"How old are you?"

"Thirty-seven."

"Well, you're not a teen-ager. What the hell are you doing in X-ray? As a technician. You're old enough to be through med school. You ought to be a radiologist."

"No, thanks."

"What do you have against radiologists?"

"It's just not for me."

"Well, what is for you? Hell, man, at thirty-seven . . ." I guess my anger is too evident on my face. He shrugs and reaches for the sandwich, changes his mind, scoops up a dollop of the mashed potatoes from beneath the gelid brown gravy.

I need to change the subject. And I resent Dr. Horne's assumption that he can assume the role of my father. "What's the story about Piedmont Hospital?" He looks as puzzled as I feel. Where the hell did that question come from? What *story* am I talking about? In truth, I've been curious about the place ever since I've been here, for a year now, but I've never pressed anyone for details.

Dr. Horne digs a pit in the dome of his mashed potatoes and then fills it in again and smoothes out the top, as if he intends to conceal from anyone who climbs the creamy white hill that something's been buried there.

"Wasn't ever meant to be a hospital," he says. "Family that built it, the Steinhauser family . . . you know, the Steinhauser Department Stores . . . they built it. Old Steinhauser went back to Virginia about 1900. He never read anything Jefferson ever wrote but he did visit Monticello. He fell in love with the building. He built a Monticello-west. In 1910 his daughter, Clarissa, a nurse, turned the place into a hospital."

"And the old man didn't shoot her?"

"He was dead. Died about 1907, 1908. So she changed it to a hospital. For relatives and friends at first. Had about fifteen beds. After a couple years people from the Berkeley hills wouldn't go to the Oakland hospitals, or to Peabody, in Berkeley. They all came to Piedmont. A room was added here and there over the years. Walls knocked out, parking spaces set up, equipment bought—all that went on before the war. Now it has seventy-six beds and most of its patients still come from the Berkeley and the Oakland hills. Take my family, for instance. I was born here, my daughter was born here, so were my two sons, and so were three of my grandchildren. Except for the new arrivals who've come here since the war, that's the way it is for most families in the hills."

"And the new arrivals?"

"They go to Kaiser, mostly. Or to Peabody."

"So this is really a private hospital. But it's called Piedmont Community Hospital. The word community . . ."

"I knew it. I guess I sensed it. That's what I meant, I guess, when I suggested you get out of medicine." He shook his head while I tried to fathom what he meant. "Basically, you're a social worker. Dr. Ackerman told me once to watch out for Jews who are satisfied to be flunkeys. They're flunkeys for a reason."

"What's the reason?"

"So they can complain about it."

"Fuck Dr. Ackerman."

He laughs, and glances about to see if any of the nurses and aides and LVNs sitting nearby have heard me. Several have, and they join Dr. Horne in his laughter.

He leans close and murmurs, "It might help her but it wouldn't help me." I decide not to say anything more. Dr. Horne takes advantage of my silence. "I know the arguments about the *Community* thing. It comes up at almost every Board of Trustees meeting. We get tax breaks because we're a *community* hospital. But we serve a restricted, segregated if you will, clientele. Well, I'll tell you something I tell every other bleeding heart who brings this up. Because this hospital exists up here in the hills, those people in the flats, the poor people, the colored people, they get better medical care than they'd get anywhere."

Hold Your Breath! *is the second chapter of a novel (bearing the same title) set in a small family hospital which, in ten years, expands into a major medical center. Its author describes the book as "about health care and politics in the United States. . . .a long diagnosis of a very sick society. Prescription: concern, involvement. Prognosis: Hopeless." CHESTER AARON teaches at St. Mary's College, near Berkeley, put in 15 years of hospital work, is now finishing his fourth novel. The third,* An American Ghost, *is due from Harcourt in March.*

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"I don't follow you."

"Peabody Hospital, downtown, in the city of Berkeley, is a damn fine hospital. First of all, it was *designed* to be a hospital. It has good modern equipment. I practice there. So does every other physician on our staff. Patients there get the same care they'd get if they came here. I get paid less there. Sometimes I don't get paid at all. So what the patients do who come here to Piedmont is, they're financing the care the poor people, the colored people, get at Peabody."

I've been to Peabody once. I applied for a job there before I'd applied at Piedmont. There had been no openings but the Chief Tech there had told me there was an opening at Piedmont. "You might like it there," she said. "It's kind of, you know, not really a hospital, it's a small place and it doesn't get many emergencies, and it's old but everyone who works there seems to like it. It's small enough and old enough and informal enough to be sort of like a big family."

Now, hearing Dr. Horne's description of how and why it functions, I have a strange feeling it's not just altruism that he and those other physicians have at heart. What if those patients who live in the flats, who don't live in the hills, don't want to go to Peabody, but *want* to come up to Piedmont where they can sit under the redwoods and enjoy that magnificent view of the two bridges and the San Francisco Bay? The taxes they're paying the city and the state are helping the hospital, and the taxes the hospital is not paying (because it's a *community* hospital) are *not* helping them . . . so they have every right . . . I can see Dr. Horne is expecting the questions. He seems not so much uneasy as impatient.

"OK," I say. "I accept your arguments. And I'll even admit I like working here. It *is* like a big family, a big family business."

Dr. Horne smiles and the face that has a reputation for being permanently hard, turns soft and friendly. "You've been infected," he says.

"OK, I'm infected." That's true. I do have an attachment to this crazy old Monticello-west. I don't want to leave. Though I have strong feelings about Dr. Horne's motives and reasonings I like him better than I have before. I've already decided that after today, whenever anyone complains about his grouchiness, about the time he takes to make a diagnosis or complete a surgery, I'll defend him. "But now can *I* be presumptuous?"

He giggles like a child and, without asking he takes his and my cups and fills them both with fresh coffee. When he sits down he says, "All right. It's your turn. Go ahead. Be presumptuous."

"I have the feeling you're a fair man. A concerned citizen. I mean you don't think people ought to be treated differently just because they're Jews or Negroes."

Dr. Horne's face again turns serious, and hard. He obviously does not quite know where, suddenly, the conversation is heading. He waits.

"If you saw someone, say, experimenting with new surgical techniques, using Negroes as guinea pigs, I think you'd protest. Right?"

The word *protest* stiffens his back and a scowl intensifies the hardness of his face. "What's this big concern with Negroes all of a sudden? Civil rights. Boycotts. You liberals have suddenly discovered we've got Negroes here. *I've* known it all my life. Protest?"

"I don't mean you'd boycott or picket or carry signs. I mean you'd question what was being done and if you were convinced, by the evidence, that it was wrong, you'd try to get the people who were doing it to stop doing it. Calmly, rationally, not violently."

"I would like to think," Dr. Horne says, pondering each word as if he's testifying before a judge, "that I'd examine the evidence and behave like any fair-minded member of the medical community, yes."

"All right. But look, Dr. Horne—and I'm not asking you this because I want to recruit you for any communist cell, I'm asking to get your professional evaluation of something that's been bothering me for a year or so. Is there any reason, as far as you know, why Negroes ought to be given more radiation to produce a diagnostic film than white patients are given?"

"You mean a colored patient and a white patient, both the same size, same muscle structure?"

"That's what I mean."

"You mean give extra radiation just because a patient is colored?"

"That's what I mean."

Dr. Horne studies my face, as if I might know something he ought to but doesn't know. "Why would anyone do that?"

"I don't know why, but I know it's being done. When I trained at Cal and all the years I worked at Kaiser I never gave extra radiation to Negroes and my films were OK."

"Do our technicians do it?"

I laugh. "Well, as you know, we don't X-ray any Negro patients here."

Dr. Horne shakes his head, fingering his chin and then the furrows in his brow. "I can't figure out why. Have you talked to the radiologists here, Dr. Ackerman and Dr. Porter?"

"Yes. They wouldn't really talk much about it. They say there might be reasons for it but they don't know any techs who do it. Of course they don't."

The paging system crackles and Dr. Horne's name is called. After he answers the page he returns for a final sip of coffee. He remains standing. When he puts down his cup he shakes his head. "Can't give you any reasons why it should be done. But if you're interested, I'll talk to some of my colleagues at U.C. Biologists and physiologists."

"I'm interested. Hope you get some rest. Do you have another surgery?"

"Oh no. That was my wife. I forgot we had guests for dinner. I even forgot I was to be home for dinner." He turns and walks off, stopping at a table to talk to Miss Tanaka. Her eyes widen at first, in fear, and then she blushes and giggles. The other nurses at her table laugh and shout, "Dare you, dare you."

Dr. Horne leans down and kisses Miss Tanaka on the cheek. The nurses and everyone else in the dining room applaud and Miss Tanaka hides her red face in her hands. □

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MICHAEL BURKARD

INVENTIONS OF THE DEAD

An older woman
describing sleeves
during a black rain ——

"He hung (even the roads
came to see him hung),

as if buried between two hands.
The roads were, the torches
were . . . indifferent. His arms,

well one arm was hugging
his other arm. They were like
rugs. Even though his sleeves

were dark, he said his arms
included escape. His sleeves
were then two arms

that would explode. I imagine
he thought the rooms

were bleeding,
the light was kneeling . . ."

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2

Back, where I lost
the forgetting, or when the soaked nets
are all hung

I wake the branches. Even tonight
they lift the mirror from
my hands,

they lift the shoes
from my throat.

They return from the window.

3

Handing the dead
back to the house, saying

House, I'm tired
of the dead. You take them.
Please them in your rooms.

Take them —— the milked,
the forgotten. Give
them lamps (they will
always be asking for lamps),

give them skins. A window
when they ask for a door.

Feed them branches.
Please them with some moon.

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A STORY BY ELIZABETH HARRIS

THE TEXIAN AT KUBLIN'S HOTEL

At the far end of the high shoddy lobby he sprawls in a chair before the fireplace, talking with the ease of a man who will never know when he had no audience. The elderly Yankee couple ("from Bang-or, he hass a fillig station") sit stark upright on a loveseat. Kublin, puffing like a fat cocker spaniel but smiling, smiling, builds a fire in the fireplace.

Missis Kublin grips her firmly by the upper arm and doesn't bother to whisper. "Whatsa madder vith you? I know. Single girl. All alone on a veekend."

She has said girl by way of a compliment to the youngish woman in her grip, the only one in the place who understands everybody, the Yankees, the Jews, even the Texan.

"I wooden do this for eferybody, but you such a nize girl. Come meet the nize young man." What strength in the old girl's gilded claw.

It comes of having spoken to them in the afternoon as one of the ("How *ah* you?"), and yet—she collects gestures, inflections as other people do rugs or brass—in travelling one must, if one wishes to see from the inside. When in Rome.

Missis Kublin drags her towards the fireplace past half a dozen crafty clusters of empty chairs, any one a better place to listen, say, for the ghostly clatter of mah jongg. Left alone she could just evoke those crowded colorful summer days when they had laid long tables outside in the orchard for a wedding or a bar mitzvah, and the families and strangers-become-friends laughed through the lobby secure in their private shared possession: Jewishness. Oh the ethnic is so charming.

"Sheriff Red Williams, he's married t' m' first cousin Mairlou, he rode out to Luke Bratton's pasture with his depity, fellow name of, why howdy, ma'am."

The Texan unwinds his leg from the chair arm as elaborately as if he were the sole proprietor of courtesy, and stands.

"Thiss iss Miss Barnes! She iss alzo an Texian!"

Miss Barnes, in the rubber soled shoes so comfortable for walking and the wash 'n' wear suit that stands up at some distance from her body smiles remotely and wishes that here, of all places, she had said Minnesota ("Where are you from? Where you people liff? They are liffing?"). Texas is such an embarrassing place to be from.

His tanned, cheeky face, showing rows of perfect white teeth, grins. He leans back in his boots, his thumbs on his belt, a summernoon sun of insouciance.

"Well, all be. What parta Texas you from, Miss Barnes?"

"Ah, well. I don't really consider myself a Texan." After his drawl her syllables sound like well-oiled metal things clickety-clicking downhill, each about to run over the one in front of it. "I've been away for years and years. Oh, half my life. I live in Boston now."

A leather patch on one back pocket brags, Genuine Levi's.

"That so? Naow that's too bad. You know we like to keep all our folks at home. My name's Led Jamison. I sure am glad to meet you."

He is packed relaxed inside his clothes, older than she is but unimproved by time. Beside him she feels twitchy and conscious of her neck, which on purpose she does not pull in. Because there may be Texans and Texans, but this is exactly the most embarrassing kind. Some yahoo from West Texas. Why can't these people stay at home?

Kublin stands up from the fire brushing his hands, and she looks down from the Texan onto tight gray curls.

"Mister Kublin. How many years you are here?" Cleverly she disarranges the words.

"Us? Ha, ha." He mimes wry wisdom because that is how to be an old public Jew. "We are here only twenty-fife years. Before iss Selznick Hotel. Oh, Selznick wass full up. Efery summer. We haf now four guests, and welcome. But iss the winter."

Busty Missis Kublin toys proudly with a ruffle on her blouse. From the little sofa the Yankee grandmother ("they fisit their children who liff in a Capecod") blinks and smiles and changes her mind, while the Yankee grandfather, either to detach himself from all these flamboyant Texans and Jews, or because he has no other winter attitude, stares into the fire.

"Ah, well," she looks up at the balcony that leads to her room. "I think I'll say goodnight." On the other side of the fireplace a formation of cardtables waits forever under a canvas cover.

Missis Kublin puts a hand on her shoulder and pulls down hard. "Sit!"

A wing chair receives her with a dull flap, and dust. It was to have been a quiet atmospheric weekend in this old

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ELIZABETH HARRIS is a sometime Massachusettsian, has published in other literary quarterlies, is spending this year in Dublin.

place. ("Ooh! Ve haf here just for you!" "Ah, well, I didn't really," "You'll like, you'll like"). She has driven past hundreds of times. Kublin's Hotel. Dining. Dancing. Cocktails. Vacanc. All lies but the last, saved for truth by the loss of the singular.

"Wellsir, ma'am," the Texan sits down redraping his leg over the chair arm. "Bein a Texas gal and all, you'll be inersted in a little mystery we had down McCulloch County fore I left."

He pauses for her to say something, and she remembers yes, there is a way to talk to these people too, and something in particular she is supposed to say to a Texan at this conversational juncture. She does not intend to say it. She does not even intend to remember what it is.

In the rude silence he is puzzled. After all, some of these Yankees may have no manners, but this here's a Texas gal.

"Well, it as this way. Luke Bratton's second boy found five of their horses in the pasture on a Monday, looked like they'd been shot. Yessir, shot."

"Ha, ha!" says Kublin. "Iss lots of shooting!"

"In Texass," says Missis Kublin.

"Nome," says the Texan.

"Eferywhere," says Kublin the host.

Through the door into the diningroom she can see the corner plot where an optimistic dozen tables covered with darned white cloths are roped off from the rest of the room by dusty velvet-covered ropes. Peacefully alone at her table she had contemplated chairs upended like long-legged dead insects on rows of table surfaces the rear length of the building.

"Turned out, though, Doc King did a post mortem on one of em, the one that died, and there wasn't no bullet in the wound."

"Wasn't very deep, either, only it opened an artery behind the left foreleg, and the horse bled to death fore they found im."

"Ach!"

"Ve haf near here horses." Firelight shows through the stack of blonde ringlets.

"Yessem. I come up to sell some."

She imagines in the dim reaches of the empty rooms manners, fashions, fascinating in their difference, twice fascinating in their age—mauve, dove, buff, spring green—and to have them all splashed red by some crass Texan with a story to tell. She breathes patiently: such are the risks of the tourist.

"It as a right mystery. Written up in the paper and everthang. Well, then they reckoned them horses musta been snagged on some place, and Sheriff Red Williams, him and the depity, they took another ride out ere to the pasture, but they couldn't find no place where them horses could've been snagged."

In a few years the man will look like dried cowhide. All those dry-country ranchers get to. She catches herself up—only she knows as much, say of the Sicilians. Now his innocent friendly face pleats and unpleats like some tan vinyl, without leaving a mark. He addresses each of the group in turn. The Yankee grandmother shuffles the pages of her magazine without reading and looks up without listening, still undecided whether to smile. The Yankee grandfather stares into the fire.

The Texan turns back to her.

"And you know what they finely figgered out had happened?"

He pauses for her to say something, and without intending to at all, she says, "Naow what was that, Mr. Jamison?"

"Call me Led." Dammit. Give those people an inch. "It as a buck deer gone on a rampage and gored em horses! Some of em in two or three places!"

Kublin says, "They should haf keep them in the barn."

"Vat iss gored?"

"Shut up, Mama. You forgiff her, she don't unnerstand. Don notice her."

Quietly out of the wrangle she hears herself say, "Imagine that." After everything, the bounding buck deer gathers long slim legs up to fly over fences and pastures, for miles and miles.

"Why you don't even have to imagine it, Miss Barnes, it's a fact. What parta Texas you say you was from?"

"I didn't," she says slowly. "But my mother's people came from Ector County. Name's Simpson."

"Why shore. Ah know the Ector County Simpsons. Don't know any of em personally, but I know the name. They been down there a long time."

"Yes. They have."

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Driving up the Southern coast of Yugoslavia she had looked not out to sea, to the islands where lavender is grown, but inland, where the farming is rough and the land rocky and the vegetation spiny, dark green, and coated with white dust. Feeling an inappropriate yearning in the gut, she had wondered whether she was coming down with the *turista*, or whether the provincial she had cultivated into cosmopolite longed for some place called home. She had decided it must be the *turista*.

"Well, now, howcum you wanta live off up here, Miss Barnes?"

She looks at the black boot with the nets and coils of yellow stitching.

With a sardonic imitation of the Yankee woman's unwilling smile, she stands up. "Mr. Jamison, the world is a big place."

He grins on indulgently. "Naow hadn't I told you to call me Led?" It's a waste of time to be rude to a Texan.

"I'll say goodnight now."

"Ach, no!" says Missis Kublin.

"Ah, I think so, yes," she says. "I'm very tired."

"Let her go, Mama. Poor girl, she iss tired. Goodnight. Sleep well. Iss more blankets in the closet if you are cold."

The Yankee grandmother jerks her head in a half-nod. The Yankee grandfather turns his face halfway towards the others. Missis Kublin's pink Valentine mouth pouts open.

Miss Barnes has been enthusiastically to continents, peninsulas, isthmuses, seas, gulfs, oceans, islands, archipelagoes, and has brought back slides for the ninth graders in a small town school, because she knows it is good for them, and it is what she likes to do. She herself lives in the city and drives out to work daily and feels pleasantly a stranger. Despite the dry season and the rainy season, she has been to unpeopled but more to peopled places, to capitals and tourist attractions and to obscure and untouristed attractions. Cultivated by the best guide books she has walked through walled cities supposed to be holy or haunted on account of mariners believed born there, queens gone mad in exile, and through museums where pieces of the bed curtain or the instruments of torture she may have been shown, only shown, can be seen. She has always known where she was and mixed with the people, at the Calgary Stampede, at the *fiesta* of the *patrones* of Teotitlan de Valle, at the Richter concert in Firenze, at whatever colorful folk gathering. She is moved by certain experiences but never overpowered. That is the wisdom of the stranger. With her large purse full of things like safety pins and wash 'n' dries she has been to places where, however sensible of the sacrifice of color, one would not, in all good sense, descend from one's camel. She makes careful choices which are sometimes wrong, but you couldn't really lose, it was always an experience. She has had typhoid in Turkey, for she does not take the bus tours with the other school teachers, and therefore she is modest when the seatmate on an Atlantic crossing asks confessionally, is this your first? She is proud of being interesting.

The room offers worn pink chenille and knotty pine, and a glimpse out through an ancient black fire escape onto bare white branches, and further before she switches on the light, to what remains of the poor-farming hills. New England lies broken in the twentieth century, and safely alien. Closer and further away she remembers liveoak and mesquite, agarita and prickly pear and yucca, the white calichi dust that coats your shoes, the sun at noon and the wind all the time, the distances and the absences. As she folds the versatile shapeless suit, the bounding buck deer gathers long slim legs up to fly over fences and pastures, for miles and miles without variety or surprise, entirely native.

The Mexicans are barbecuing *cabrito* in an oil drum. Waking—the luminous Travelarm says 4:05—to the smell, she thinks first of how early they get up to start cooking. Then it is not *cabrito* and she pulls the little keychain on the bedside lamp. Nothing happens.

It is Kublin's hotel. She knows, even before she gets out of bed and goes to the door and feels it hot, that this is a fire.

She has never been in a fire before. She dresses herself, putting her shoes on the wrong feet and her halfslip wrongside out over her skirt, proud of her coolheadedness and hoping the floor won't collapse before she gets out or she'll never get to go coolheadedly to China.

The window sticks, but it is only locked, and after a scrabble on her knees, she carries her Pan-Am bag down the icy fire escape, knocking off a knife of snow from the railing, her feet strange in her shoes, but otherwise exactly as she disembarks from planes. Outside is dark and quiet. There is no sign of fire. She steps down into an inch of new snow and walks a cautious distance from the building.

"Fire!" Her white breath is absorbed immediately into the night.

She peers out of her face to the horizon where branches feather up into the sky. First there were snow-country farmhouses hereabouts. A few on neighboring hills have been remodeled with aluminum siding.

Uncertainly she wanders towards the front lawn. God knows how the Jews got here, but here they are: Delnick's, Novick's, Kublin's. The hotels must've been built around 1900. Before the gravel pits and the housing development down the road it must've been a green place for Momma and the kids to spend the summer, with Poppa coming down on weekends and a lot of nice people to meet under the trees. From the front there is no sign of fire either.

As if to command it, she yells again, "Fire!" at the unresponsive building. Kublin's is a graceless, three story block, brown sided along the top, white frame below, with an awkward little gabled portico for the front door. It sits back from the road with a long lawn in front of it and an apple orchard alongside.

Did she only dream the door was hot? What a novel way to come upon this nighttime view of the old place. A noise begins that seems to come from nowhere in particular. She looks around to locate it. Down the road she can see the white frame temple she has passed so many times that looks like (in another world) a country Methodist church, with a Star of David window where the rose window would be. Driving home on Friday afternoons she has seen them

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walking along the road in black hats, even nowadays none of your lost, secularized, delicatessen people here. Without people like that, there's no place for the tourist to go.

The noise is a hissing from the building, and the texture of the shingles is changed. It *is* on fire. And yet the wet roof seems to steam like something ironed, quite normally, as if it will stop in a minute. She waits, fascinated.

Suddenly the roof sags and seeping smoke is released in the dense round clouds of photographed and televised fires, blooming up against the dark sky. The original part has happened in secret. By the time something shows, the real fire has already happened, and what shows disappoints her. It is banal, utterly like a fire-prevention poster on the elementary school bulletin board. In several spots at once the roof falls in, releasing light, splashing flames that roar predictably high into the smoke. From points of collapse burning brands fly in high arcs—calculable, no doubt, in some geometry—out onto the lawn. The snow is lit in exotic patterns. Those, at least, she thinks, but her cold breaths are sharpened by the smoke which smell like—smoke. And yet I have never seen a fire close up, she thinks, I ought to be impressed. Kublin's hotel will never be again. Where will we be tourists when there are no more Kublin's Hotels? But she is indifferent. Can you get tired of experience?

"Aiee, Miss Barnes, Miss Barnes!" They cry from the other side of the building. Guilty—she had thought of the scene, of herself, of tourism, but not of—running through the light snow she catches sight of the others in clusters on the side lawn.

The Yankee grandparents shelter each other with a blanket. The Kublins stand apart from them, Missis Kublin in curlers, twenty years older without her make-up, Kublin gesturing as if to God. Towards them across the field runs a bearded man in a black hat with a long black overcoat over pajamas, and away in Medway the fire horn starts. At a small distance, with his good ten gallon Stetson on the back of his head, the Texan looks up as he might look at a fireworks display on Texas Independence Day.

She had forgotten about him.

The evening comes in upon her, and from years ago, the curtains, billowing in from floor length windows in the coolness of the morning, as they do in the heat of the day, as they do in the coolness of the evening, but you cannot cherish those perpetually inbillowing curtains, because it's a joke. A Texas joke, Does the wind always blow this way down here? Nope, sometimes it blows t'other way. The guinea fowl close by say p-track, p-track, and from far off come one bawl, one bleat, incessant soft yapping. You can see the expanse with your ear, only that's a joke, too, a railrider's joke they say—the sun has riz, the sun has set, but here we is in Texas yet—but *you* know some Texan made it up, to protect himself from awe, as they do.

"Who-ee! I shore am glad to see you, Miss Barnes. I as about to go back in there after you." Even at this distance they can feel the heat now.

From another kind of person that would be nothing but a facetious lie. Why, I thank you Mr. Jamison, Led.

"Ah, Miss Barnes," calls Missis Kublin without moving.

Midday, you put on a sunbonnet ("You'll cook your brains!") and walk slowly out to the mailbox, three-quarters of a mile. The road runs straight out to another road, which runs straight out to another road, which runs straight out to another road, for a long, long way before it curves, if it ever does, or gets anywhere, if it ever does. With only those durable, expensive, bobwire on cedarpost fences, like the conscience of the man who owns them, to show that you are anywhere at all. And more of anywhere than you could ever want to be.

"So, ha, ha," Kublin calls. "We go to Miami after all. You come see us there."

The roof has melted or been eaten, gone without ever all falling.

"I don know, Mama, I can't think what wass it."

"My vig, Shmuel, my vig!"

"Rooms," says the man in the long black overcoat.

"Rooms at Delnick's," says Kublin. "Let us all go to my good *landtsman* Delnick's." Nobody moves.

She remembers how a cloud of dust approaches along the road, and you wait because you must. And wait, and wait. A pickup jumps over the rough road. The driver in a cheap sweat-marked ten gallon straw hat could be anybody, but she sees Missis Kublin's Texian, with his flexible tan grin. He waves hugely, is gone. You wave at the disappearing cloud. You must. "Why I seen your niece out at your-all's mailbox one time las summer and she didn't even wave at me." Up at the house somebody knows where he was going and what for.

"Lookit that!"

In the firelight, redder than any earth-time, the three little groups in the snow watch one wall lean inwards under what might be the delicate pull of the flame. Away in Medway the siren on the first fire engine begins like waking from a dream.

"What *you* gonna do?" the Texan confides. "I'm onna call up my brother on the telephone (after you, of course, ma'am), and I'm onna have him wire me some money, an I'm onna get in my rig tomorrow, and I ain't gonna stop noplace on the way but a Holiday Inn I know in Tennessee." From the shell of her own edifice she sees red carpets and aquamarine swimming pools in his eyes.

"Say," he says, "whyn't you call up down home and tellem you're a comin home! Been burnt out and comin home! At's what I'd do, if I was you. Tell em I as comin home!"

She hadn't realized he was homesick. He had talked to her as if she had been his neighbor, because to him she was.

"Aw, Led." It's all right to tell *him*. "I only lost an in-sured car. I've still got an apartment in the city and a job down here. Maybe I'll call a friend to come pick me up."

She won't. She sees herself in the blinding morning snowlight standing at the side of the road, independent and adaptable, hitching a ride with strangers who will be interesting, as strangers always are, back to a familiarly strange city. Catching sight of her footprints in the snow, she wonders what funny animal has made them, and conjures something with the neck of a giraffe and the head of a chimpanzee, one foot a yak's, the other a duck's, a clumsy, laughable, nameless beast. □

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DAVID STEINGASS

FROM "SIX DAYS IN JULY"

Could be early November or late April: cold, wet, the
wind unrolling highways anywhere through flat, bland
Minnesota. In fear of the wind I stop at a cafe. I
anticipate the waitress, her shy-smiling overweight
desperation. She attacks my eyes as though a gold pea
is hidden behind one of them. I open the Fargo Sunday
paper. I remember wrapping picture frames in newsprint
the fall I moved away to college. White birch trunks
glistening out of the grey morning like bones form
the strangely calm black moth patterns of drowning un-
der ether. Suddenly, this is all the Midwest I knew
fifteen years ago! The woods is a northern dialect
I'm beginning to pick up again. I think of following
the road through woods into distance and darkness,
coming out . . . somewhere. This is my seventh drive
across country. One day among Mormon farms in Utah,
the sun struck brown and green slabs from the canyons:
six hours without another car. Stoplights and cross-
roads are clogged with caravans of travel trailers rem-
iniscent of tank or Conestoga columns. Pointing at
maps like dozen-armed weather vanes, men wearing jackets
branded with travel patches cluster around their lead-
ers' hoods. Motor bikes and the turmoil of noisy picnics
branch away from each trailer like spokes of a spider's
web. This is their game. I see all the roads inter-
lock at intervals to form a huge concrete net which is
beginning to beach the country. Outside my motel, a
stuffed moose stands with a mailbox welded around his
neck, and allows neither pets nor children.

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A STORY BY GEORGE KEITHLEY

Flesh and Dust

I'm up against it, boys," the bettor said, walking up. We stood at the wood fence, watching the horses led by to the starting gates. I stepped aside as he slipped in with us, and looked up to see their colors shimmer while the horses shifted past. The jocks sat easy, the silks flapped in the hot sun like flags.

The first race was a sprint of six furlongs, and the grounds-crew wheeled the white gates onto the backstretch so the sprint would end down in the middle of the straightaway, in front of the grandstand high and green under the sun.

We thought he was joking. "I'll swap you a name, you buy me a beer," one boy said. The man asked: "Who do you like in the double? Give me a couple of names. Just in the second race." We laughed again.

"I wish I knew," I said.

"They're two-year-olds," he said. "Help a fellow out."

"What about the handicaps?" a boy asked him.

"I've read them all," said the man. He pulled out the speed ratings and forms from his coat pocket. And he had all these paper tip sheets, green ones, pink ones, orange ones, a handful of them. They shook in his hand like a huge dry flower.

I asked him: "Who do you like in the first race?"

He was secretive about it. He looked onto the track where I suppose he was trying to pick up the number of his horse. He wore spectacles. Took them off, examined the lenses, trapping two little ponds of light there for a minute, and fit them on again. "I'm all right in the first," he said, not saying a name. "I need a long shot to pair him with."

Even in a hot summer it was a good job for a boy, on the paddock and the infield and in the stands as a groundskeeper or a janitor. In nine weeks you could make quite a lot of money: a dollar an hour, working 11 hours a day, six days a week, and four hours on Sunday when the track was closed for moral reasons, clearing out the extra debris from the large Saturday crowds. There were disadvantages. It was difficult to get to Mass, and it was impossible to get a haircut.

After the morning workouts which you slipped off to watch if good horses were working, you had to go twice as hard to catch up, by noon when the crowd was first arriving. You broke into a sweat by mid-morning. The dust and sawdust and the sandy dirt of the grounds and the paddock would cake on your skin. The track owner's daughter said, "The boys don't look very presentable. And they smell like pigs." After that, we had to watch the races from the fence out on the far turn, away from the crowd.

So this bettor came out to see us, his hands in the pockets of a tan coat he wore, in the July sun. I have no idea why he should wear a coat in summer unless he felt chilled from not eating well, which with his luck is very possible.

"What do you have today?" he asked, like a man coming by every day to ask for a tip, half seriously. But it was in the fifth week of the season and none of us had ever seen him before, or recognized him. "What do you have?" he asked, and we laughed. He smiled tightly and it was painful to see he was not joking, not half joking, and needed money shamefully.

"What do you want me to do, ask one of these jockeys?" His eyes widened behind his spectacles and his lips parted. He looked suddenly happy. "I can ask a trainer."

We were silent as we stood in the heat, looking past him. The horses loafed off the curve. Finally a boy said, "You can do worse." "Yes," another said, "Your woman can be diseased."

He settled the coat back on his shoulders; you could see him stiffening, angry. Not at these remarks but at the lack of an answer. I suppose he could swallow any amount of shame, tight-lipped and stiff like that, if it would only make him some money. The shame itself didn't matter so much—he could offer it up. But he grew angry because he didn't see a way to go. "The trainer *ought* to know the horse!" he said, as if it was a rule of the track.

"By God," he said, with a world of confidence at the

GEORGE KEITHLEY is probably better known as a poet. His brilliant long poem, The Donner Party, *was published by Braziller a year ago. He is on the faculty at Chico State College, California.*

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moment and no anger left to muddy up his conviction: "the trainer should know his own horse." He looked about at us. "They *live* with them, don't they? I mean day and night, the trainer's at hand if there's any work needed. Isn't that right?"

"And the stable boys marry them," a boy said.

"The trainer must know if his horse is ready," the bettor said. "Isn't that right, boys?"

"But the trainer admires the horse," I said. "Listen, he admires every horse he's given."

"What's wrong with that?"

The horses were poking about on the backstretch and slowly drifting toward the starting gates. "I'd better be moving, boys, to get my money down. Where will I find a trainer?"

"They're at the fence below the grandstand," a boy said. "You can ask, the ushers know them."

"Ask more than one," the boy called after him, but he was running to the grandstand with his coat slipping across his back.

I yelled after him: "Who will you bet in the first?" He halted and stared back at us. In two gold shapes like coins the rich sun glared off his spectacles. "We'll pull him in from here!" I called.

He turned and hurried on. "Fare Thee Well!"

It was a bay horse and he was to go off at 4-to-1; at least two other entries would have lower odds.

I'm a fool, but I never bet on a bay. Or a mare. But it's no good telling a man how to spend his money, especially when it's already lost. And this man could lose his money before he reached into his pocket. I was wrong about the bay.

When the horses were urged into the gates the crowd hushed. The bell rang, the cheering beat up from the fresh crowd over in the grandstand, and the horses tore down on us. They sprinted into the turn. That bay must have broken right with the pack and he had the best speed in the field. He led around the turn and looked to be leaping away from the rest of them, in the stretch.

Across the track at the wire the horses were moving away from us and the brilliant silks, the dust, and the horses all swam together. As far as we could see, at the finish it was nothing but bright flesh and dust.

Right away the address system called out Fare Thee Well the winner. In the last minutes before the start his odds had slipped, but only to 7-to-2. That's what I meant, even if he won he could lose somehow doing it. It would take a fine long shot now to make the double pay well, and the winner of the second race came in at 3-to-1.

In the middle of the afternoon the bettor came by again.

"We saw you win the first half," said a boy.

He had that shameful smile. "That's all I got."

"You had to be with something long, after that."

When he told us the horse the trainer had given him for the second race, we stood with him and looked across the green infield in the sun. There's a clear pond in the center of the grass and swans were cruising on it, white and cool . . . I thought I remembered the horse; he'd passed us in the large pack, very pleasant, and stayed there. Maybe five or six horses behind him, and as many ahead of him under the wire. We turned away and the man walked around with us.

"Boys, who do you like in the eighth race? What do you make of the feature?"

A boy could place a bet if he gave his money to a groom or a trainer or a crew foreman to take to the window. The one horse I was very fond of that season was Manassas, who'd never been anything on a dirt track and was just beginning to show he was a fine runner on turf, where he showed a great heart and surprising strength. After he was dull on the dirt tracks, when he was first being tried on the turf and the odds on him were long enough he was a handsome bet. I was vainly happy with what I knew and what I thought few other people in the country knew. Like betting your life on the blood and the determination of Iron Liege running on the mud. But Manassas was not running this week, and I didn't have to find out if I was generous enough to give his name to this bettor.

For my part I told him, "I don't have anything I can give you."

"Then I'll stick with what I'm on," he said.

We asked who he was betting. He would talk about it now. I suppose he couldn't scrape up a bet to cover himself even if we had a tip to name. He had gone in on his last chance now, so it couldn't matter if he talked about it anyway. "The trainer gave me In Your Honor," he said. "He's a strong black gelding at 35-to-1."

I thought the horse was way out-classed, he was a prestige entry for the owner. Putting his horse in with a name field. But the bettor said: "This trainer tells me that today they're really trying with this horse."

"Let's hope so," we said. He left us and walked back to the stands for a good view.

That gelding was a bad joke. The owner was a young man with money. The story went around with us that at cocktail parties, when someone learned he had bought a horse and asked him "What did you name him?" he'd flatter the guest by saying, "Why, I named him In Your Honor."

The first time I heard that I said to myself, can you imagine a man being like that? But then you think about it, those people standing around asking him and it's what they deserve, isn't it?

The bell rang and the horses leaped out, a barrage of noise rose from the grandstand. The noise swelled and swelled in the air and the horses ripped along the track. The black gelding was boxed on the rail at the turn. The horse outside him drifted ahead, three horses were challenging in the stretch run, and In Your Honor was dead, behind the pack. The crowd roared. Down the stretch his jock was still hitting him in while the money horses eased out, well beyond the wire.

A few minutes later the bettor came up through the heat, wiping his face with his handkerchief.

He walked out to us alongside the curved board fence. We stood waiting for the ninth and last race to start, watching across the track for the horses to break from the white gates.

It was a mile and a quarter race, and they'd take all the straightaway passing the grandstand; when they had circled

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the track, coming off the far turn, they'd have to bolt along that entire straightaway once more, to the wire at the end of it. Clear across the track from us. There was nothing to watch for except that long moment when the horses came loud off the backstretch and pounded around this turn, to see if they had anything left in them for the long stretch run to the wire.

The eighth race was the feature race each day; when it was finished many people left the stands after the money was announced. The horses in the last race often were poor, and to see them hit into this turn was to see enough of them.

He walked up with his coat buttoned and his hands sunk in his pockets. His head was low but he walked purposefully like a man returning to his family in disgrace. I think he walked out to us because we were the only ones he knew would listen to his grief. Certainly he hadn't come to see this race, not from out on the turn. I doubt if he'd bet on it, I'd be surprised if he had any money left unless it was bus fare.

"You can't trust these sons of bitches," he said, so enraged about his rotten luck that tears had come to his eyes. Water lined his cheeks while he cried without even breaking his breathing.

He stood there a moment at the fence while the starting bell rang. The tone of that bell lifted him; it picked up all of us a little. With the race going, a poor race or not, that silence of movement and sound was finished, that time of a man's being thrown back upon himself, on his own bad chances.

He felt better, he wasn't crying, he patted his face with his handkerchief. I'd have given him Manassas, I'd have given him any good horse to cheer him up. His voice was even and flat: "You can't ever trust these bastards," he told us. He wiped his spectacles with a dry fold of his handkerchief and fit them on. As he walked from the fence he began cursing again. One or the other—the trainers below the stands who were fiercely loyal; or, out on the track working this far turn now, the horses who were so dull they were already wet under the whip, kicking by. □

GARY GILDNER

THE PROPOSITION TO GO RICH

Here is a world of burgundy
too old to drink,
but I am tempted, Lord, to eat
the diamonds in her fingernail dirt
and wipe my mouth off with her smile
while we lick beneath the sheets.
"How are you, darling?" Darling whispers,
and I do not answer I am fine
dust, a crust of South America, a Greek
booze you add nothing to—
I say, "I'm spent, my teeth are busted,
and the thirst is killing, darling
—how are you?"

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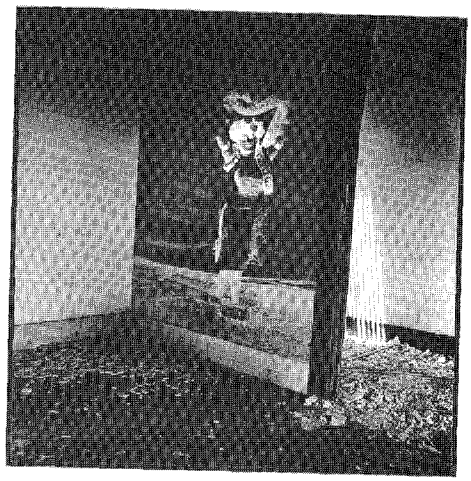

PHOTOGRAPHS

Gay Burke

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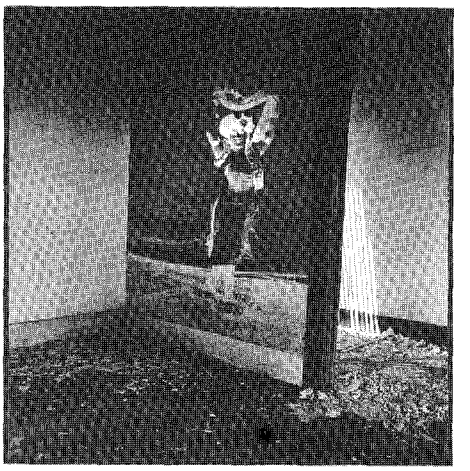

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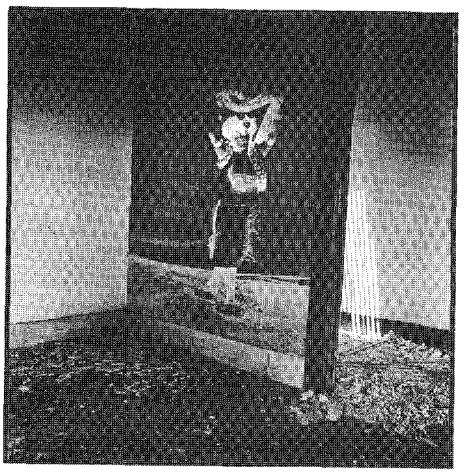

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". . . modern photography has not only considerably enlarged our vision but, in doing so, adjusted it to man's situation in a technological age. A conspicuous feature of this situation is that viewpoints and perspectives that framed our images of nature for long stretches of the past have become relative . . . stable impressions yield to ever-changing ones . . . not one single object has retained a fixed, definitely recognizable appearance."

SIEGFRIED KRACAUER

Theory of Film

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VAN K. BROCK

LITTORAL

Once on Sunday I took my sons where the sea
Had thrown up sandbars and tidepools far out
From dry beach until the moist, wave-stripped
Littoral had bared a nereid skin of sand
I scanned with skint eyes for the scampering
Beneath it of mollusks and crustaceans
And for whatever mortared with salt spittle
The primordial architecture of minute chimnied
Castles out of broken shells, sand, and seaweed.

We saw fish answering our motions
Skipping on top of the water, chunks of palm
Trunk like huge pine cones, sand dollars in
Tidepools reaching seaward, sea the motionless
Inconceivable eye of ageless saturation
Of life and mineral in warm shallows and on
The half-guessed ocean floor's terrain.
The rush of wave pulls back the shells with
Blackened tin can tops, pop or beer, among
Oil-tar painted rocks, chewed pilings,
And huge stones thrown up against the sea's
Thrust, now worn and barnacled. We looked:
The nereid gone, seaweed scattered like hair.

Whatever general answers I have given them,
Denied or been unable to deny, I have
Shown them where the beach drops suddenly
To dark water with waves folding and folding
Themselves on sand like thick wrinkled skin
Dissolving on contact with land—a being
More amorphous and strange than any in it
And connecting all the extremes in the sun's eye.

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TODD NEWBERRY is a biologist in Cowell College, University of California at Santa Cruz. "A naturalist by perspective, he has studied particularly asexual and sexual reproduction in marine invertebrates. A teacher by profession, he then is faced with the dilemma of how one can think of such things at a time like this." His collaborator is the NAR's environment editor.

Joseph W. Meeker & Todd Newberry

The Only Witness

The Sphinx is before me, questions me, I need not even try to understand the terms of the riddle being asked, there is only one answer possible, only one answer to everything: man. This will not do.
There are *questions*, and *answers*.
Man is merely, from his own point of view, the only witness.
Man looks at the world, and the world does not look back at him.

–Alain Robbe-Grillet

Well equipped only to be a witness, man has nevertheless assumed the roles of judge, prosecutor, master, manipulator, steward, and lord of creation. Among animals man is unique in his power to observe and record the world's events, but human pride does not stop there. The powers of language and analysis which make man witness also create in him the illusion that he can dominate and control the world to his own advantage. Though much evidence from past millenia supports man's claim to mastery, ours seems to be the time when we may discover, like those noblemen who can no longer pay the taxes on their castles, that we cannot afford the high costs of nobility. Or if we insist upon maintaining a contrivance of dignity that is synonymous with the destruction of our natural environment, then our civilization's "triumph" seems likely to be its ultimate disaster.

Existentialists may argue that an absurd triumph is better than none at all, but if the human mind is in some sense an adaptive faculty, then it should be able to bring more than absurdity to bear on the environmental crisis we face. We can start, at least, with something we are sure of: that we are witnesses. Like good witnesses, then, perhaps we can describe some of the ideas and beliefs and behavior that have led to our environmental predicament, reckon what promise such a heritage provides, and explore means of coping with the future in the light of this past. Neither complacency nor despair is appropriate. But in some fashion we should be able to recognize why and how civilization's ecological bill is being tendered, and what price we are of means and mind to pay.

Often in the past, the recognition of crisis has moved us toward deeper understanding of our real relationship to the world around us, even when it has also meant a certain loss of self-esteem. Carl Jung, for instance, knew that the "discovery" of analytical psychology was "symptomatic of a profound convulsion of spiritual life." Psychology was established as an organized body of knowledge only because the Western world faced a grave psychological crisis. Freud was well aware, too, that his work, which threatened the flattering assumption that man is a rational animal who lives by logic, was really a continuation of the process of human ego-deflation begun centuries earlier. He identified three "blows" which scientific theory had dealt to the human ego in recent centuries: the Copernican revolution which deposed man's world from its former prominence in the center of the universe; the Darwinian theories which wrenched man from the angels; and Freud's own psychoanalytic theory in which the rational mind merely veneers the subconscious in human thought and behavior. As Freud points out, the traditional image of man as the Lord of Creation and the center of all meaning crumbled beneath these three attacks.

The authors are grateful for the helpful comments of colleagues who have read this essay, particularly for the advice and encouragement of Professor Paul Shepard.

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Another blow has now landed, and "ecology" is its name. Ecology responds to environmental crisis as psychology does to cultural neurosis. Like psychology half a century ago, ecology's disturbing implications can be minimized by discussing it as a fad and by reducing its principles to popular slogans. "Ecological awareness" has the social status today that the Oedipus complex enjoyed fifty years ago as a topic for cocktail party conversation and as the vague focus of college term papers. And just as the popularity of Freudian psychology combined widespread use of psychoanalytic terminology with general misunderstanding of its meaning and significance, so also do similar distortions now bedevil ecology. Thus, we ponder roadside litter as an "ecological" problem, revere Arthur Godfrey as an "ecologist," study wildlife under Disney and Cousteau, and indulge faddish opinions which, as Stanley Kauffmann once said about the movie "Ship of Fools," float on the depths they pretend to plumb.

Ecology lacks its heroic Copernicus, Darwin, or Freud, and so it suffers from apparent amorphousness. Nor, perhaps is ecology really manageable by a single mind or intellectual discipline: it is not the likely domain of such singular leaders. Though scientific biology initially articulated ecological thought, biology alone cannot encompass what now is comprised by "ecological systems." For the interactions between organisms and their environments transcend biological science when man is one of the organisms at issue. And like Freud's work, ecology, too, is likely to have its greater impact beyond the discipline that nurtured it.

Ecology will necessarily become a collective effort of the entire intellectual community. Its challenge can be met only by the concerted efforts of many imaginative and incisive thinkers contributing toward an evolving synthesis beyond the individual reach of any one of them. Just as no one element in an ecosystem dominates all others, so also no person or discipline can comprehend its entirety.

Why has "ecology" arisen just at this time as a new focus of intellectual organization and inquiry? As Jung observed about psychology, two sorts of intellectual organization and inquiry converge. On the one hand, cultural changes over the centuries have formed the soil from which ecology gradually has grown. On the other hand, it is amidst a coincidence of recent events that the transcendent implications of ecology have burst upon the public consciousness. Both perspectives—the broadly historical and the distinctly contemporary—merit inventory.

Few traditional models of reality have survived intact the scathing critiques ours have been subjected to during the past four centuries. Religion has perhaps suffered most, or at least most obviously. The twins born of the Renaissance, humanism and inductive science, proved apostate in their insistence that man and his physical world are our only legitimate concerns, and that both are essentially subject to human control without need for divine assistance. Once those views had been established, it was inevitable that a Nietzsche would appear to announce the death of God; we can only be surprised that it took so long. Since Nietzsche, demolition of the ancient religious edifice has proceeded rapidly under the blows of existentialism and with the generous cooperation of scientific and economic materialism. The resulting rubble of a once powerful religious tradition looks like God's tombstone, but it is also a new monument to the divinity of liberated man. As Dostoyevsky's Kirilov puts it, "If there is no God then I am a God."

Another of Dostoyevsky's characters, Ivan Karamazov, anticipates Nietzsche with a similarly provocative syllogism: "If there is no God, then everything is permitted." When faith in an ordering deity was rejected, so was faith in the systems of moral and social law which had been built largely upon religious foundations. The vacuum left by the disappearance of divine ethical standards and goals has yet to be filled by any of the systems that have competed for allegiance during the past century—nationalism, communism, industrialism, individualism, aesthetism, escapism, and a host of lesser persuasions—even though each offers its followers a substantial guide to social structures and ethical behavior. These ideologies have tended to exclude one another, each insistent upon its own principles, none catholic enough to replace Catholicism, nor any persuasive enough to capture man's imagination as religions once did.

Post-Renaissance technology has been for many the clearest sign of man's Kirilovian divinity. Since Leonardo dreamed of damming rivers and flying through the air, engineers have shared and compounded his vision beyond even his once outlandish schemes. The technological West has lately all but freed humanity from the dangers and inconveniences of natural existence—or, rather, created an appearance of this freedom. Clever man seems to have provided for himself better than God could, and man accordingly deserves worship. Industrial technology has thus become a new humanistic religion professed by many scientists, politicians, businessmen, and other thoughtful people for whom no other kind of "religious" belief was possible.

Unfortunately, the adoration of technological man has led to serious damage to our biological environment. Its ideology has also weakened irreparably our faith in traditional philosophical and religious values. Both body and soul, we are cut off from systems of order which have sustained us in

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the past, so who can wonder we feel ill equipped for the future?

One genuinely creative moment of recent intellectual history occurred a century ago with Darwin's articulation of the principles of evolution by natural selection. As materialism and atheism barred us from God, evolution introduced us to our nearer neighbors, plants and animals. The recognition that we are animals lets us look upon ourselves not as divinity or superman, but as an organismic participant in a natural world, and as a species with an appropriate situation in the natural environment. Since Darwin, natural history and the increasingly sophisticated disciplines that have emerged from it, especially modern ecology, have revealed an intricate panorama of natural relationships and interdependencies. The spectacle was always under our noses, but it had escaped our notice while we were gazing at the stars or at flattering images in our ideological mirrors. Into the post-World War II world, ecology as a biological discipline revealed and to a remarkable extent made "scientific" sense of these interactions and began to bring them to public attention.

Just before and after World War II several books were written about the state of man's habitat and the prospects for man's natural future. They profoundly affected attitudes among students and within the scientific community. Sears' *Deserts on the March*, Osborne's *Our Plundered Planet*, Vogt's *Road to Survival*, Brown's *The Challenge of Man's Future*, as well as essays and books by Leopold, DeVoto and others depicted mankind increasingly beset by ecological problems of monumental proportions and grim character, unless preventive measures were taken to husband resources and limit populations. But persuasive though these writings were, their influence was largely restricted to circles of scientists and conservationists. The responses of this audience were virtually unheard outside the audience itself. The readers of *Audubon Magazine* wrote for one another, academic biologists lectured to one another, but little else seemed to be gained by these efforts except a heightening of frustrations. It was a time for despair among scientists whose warnings about the limits of science were so often answered from nearly every public quarter with reassurances that "science will solve it."

And then, in an extraordinary turnabout, we witnessed during the late '60s an invasion of the public consciousness by the very ecological issues and concerns which had been so indifferently received for two decades. There has been as well a response encompassing every sector of informed (and not so informed) opinion, and a response that has changed the very meaning of "ecology."

Public concern for ecological matters has coincided with several series of events which have radically altered attitudes toward both technology and ecology. Among a half dozen that might be cited, three in particular stand out: space travel, environmental pollution, and the war in Vietnam.

Man's arrival on the moon at first seemed the fulfillment of an engineer's dream. Surely, space flight was a triumph of man over his natural limitations and an affirmation of the image of man the manipulator. Instead, the view from space reminded us how finite and circumscribed life on earth really is. We beheld for the first time, by photographs and first-hand descriptions, the whole earth as a celestial body—isolated, tiny, undeniably solitary in an infinite void. The familiar view of the heavens was outward from the gigantic stability of our earth, but this astronautical one was just the opposite. That object in an immense sky, that lovely blue moon, was us—*all* of us. The globe was complete; for its inhabitants there was no place to go but around it. This perspective forced upon us a profoundly reoriented awareness of ourselves as in a way trapped, in a way nestled, but in any case thoroughly and inescapably (astronauts or no) one with our planet. From this experience has emerged the concept of a "spaceship earth," a curious fusion of biological and mechanical images which has been popular among those environmentalists who are willing to see the earth as a closed system designed to carry man somewhere.

It was also in the '60s that we began to feel the full impact of environmental pollution resulting from technological growth. Like Greek tragic heroes, we suffered a painful recognition and reversal of fortune as we saw our efforts to achieve the good life fulfilled at terrible cost. Industries and autos created to serve us produced smog to an extent never before experienced. Sophisticated agricultural techniques, developed to feed us better, degraded our soils and waters, and even produced inferior foods that then were laced with dubious additives. We saw our land piled high with trash and our sea converted into a planetary sewer. Seeking respite in the countryside, we at last opened our eyes to scenes we had formerly ignored: the scars of strip mining, clear-cut forests, great canyons lost to dams, the destruction of the small remnant of beauty and historical worth in our cities, the spearing of countryside by highways, the pervasiveness of sheer noise, and the entire wretched list of environmental disasters so familiar now to everyone. After a brief respite from the shock of the atomic bomb in the '40s, we were forced anew to recognize that we had gained technological powers of geologic magnitude but were entangled in unsuspected biological limitations of choice and prescience and self-control.

Also during the '60s, America's technological onslaught upon Indochina produced only humiliation and stalemate. Our President's assurances not-

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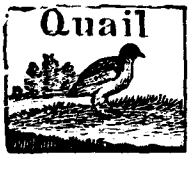
withstanding, we came to see ourselves as a grotesque and helpless giant, unable to prevail over an enemy even though we found it easy to devastate his land. We have been neurotic in our restraint, or, as at My Lai, insane in our fury, but either way our power to destroy has demonstrated only our own weakness. This grim war has damaged not only our conscience but also our faith in technology's ability to solve our dilemmas. Technology has not yet committed suicide by blowing us all up as many expected in the early years of the atomic age. Rather, it has somehow met its match in the refusal of a technologically inferior Oriental people—almost creatures of nature in the prejudiced Western view—to buckle before our mechanized ferocity. Bicycles have beaten B-52s, and the abacus has outfoxed the computer.

As technology has lost its power to inspire hope for the future, "ecology" has emerged from the obscurity of scientific jargon and has assumed public prominence. Inevitably, the meaning of ecology has changed with its transformation from a scientific study into a major social movement. Until the early 1960s, "ecology" designated a biological study comparable in scope to, say, "cytology" or "embryology." Like these other terms, ecology referred both to the biological discipline and to the phenomena investigated. One spoke of the ecology of tall-grass prairies, the ecology of rocky seashores, the ecology of the desert locust, the ecology of parasitism. Used this way, the term draws attention to the array of interrelationships that combine in action and effect to characterize prairies or seashores as places where life persists, the way of life of the locust, the attributes of parasitism. Efforts toward such characterizations are both descriptive and experimental, dealing increasingly with quantified data and biometrical methods. Ecology, in this sense, both as an endeavor and as consequent knowledge, flourished thoroughly within the methods, restraints, customs, and intentions of traditional science. In this sense, it still does.

The word "ecology" has been so transformed in the last decade that one now speaks of "protecting" the ecology of, say, a river-valley, a rare species, our whole planet. One hears that the "ecology" of Lake Erie has been destroyed, that a power plant will devastate the "ecology" of a mesa. In these contexts, "ecology" has gathered—like our altered view of the whole earth from space—intimations of "integrity," "heritage," "sanctuary" (this last in as much a spiritual as a geographic sense).



Into this scene, Paul Ehrlich dropped *The Population Bomb*. The message was not new, but the audience was in a different mood than that of Sears and Osborne and Brown. Ehrlich's power was that he dealt with "scientific" issues in an unnervingly unavoidable, inescapable and "scientific" way. Here were "the facts," quantitatively, do with them what we would or could. Carson's *Silent Spring* had earlier stressed not only humanity's own welfare but also the worth of resources such as beauty and the abundance of life around us; now it was a matter of simple life and death as Ehrlich forced us to look at the ecological implications of concrete events surrounding us.

In these circumstances, framed in and pronounced from the cast of science, Ehrlich's writings scraped an already frayed public nerve. The consequence, of course, has been that the issues of ecology generally and especially as they affect the natural predicament of mankind have taken the public conscience by storm and invasion.

Invasion—and then, in reaction, a virtual epidemic proliferation of statements. For Carson's and Ehrlich's messages and events coincident with their publication (the war, for example) raised doubts about technology's capacity to deal with the public consequences of its own activities. Not many people still believe that there is a technological solution for every environmental problem. Science and technology seem increasingly inadequate to our genuine needs. With this realization "ecology" has taken on moral and other philosophical content. It has become the arena in which the boasts and the achievements of technology confront the facts of our lives and are tested by them.

With this metamorphosis, a whole range of perspectives has become pertinent to "ecology" and manifested itself in the outpouring of commentary on the supra-biological aspects of our biological situation. Our new perspective recognizes the limitations of technology and suggests that integrity and other such "moral" qualities are pertinent to our natural situation and not just to particular interactions among ourselves. The premises by which we estimate our worth and that of our enterprises must therefore be scrutinized anew. Just as previous material achievements—the steam engine, for example—transformed man far beyond their initial material impact, so also the reach into space, the computer, the discovery of plastics, and all the avalanche of technological advances of the past decades generate rather than consumate profound influences upon the human predicament. We have only begun to trace some first evidences of the transcendent, ideational effects of these technological leaps. Fluidity of attitude, reappraisal of our lot, realization of myth —by such evidence as this we are clearly in flux and reorientation now.

One sure consequence, however, is already apparent: the complexity of our thinking about the world must increase to accommodate orders of intricacy which we have never before imagined.

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We have grossly oversimplified the world in our belief that we were the only important creatures in it. The dangers of zoomorphizing man, of course, are as great as those of anthropomorphizing or even ignoring nature. Man's capacity for symbolic and abstract thought does set us apart from other animals, though we frequently exaggerate that difference or mistake its significance. When we study man we must deal with him not only as an animal but also as one with a unique capacity for manipulating his habitat, for comprehending his environment, and for undertaking distinctively human imaginative and spiritual experiences. The mind inescapably dominates the shape of our survival.

Teilhard de Chardin coined the term "noosphere" to designate the planetary realm of mental activity and its consequences. In his view, the noosphere ranks equally with the lithosphere, hydrosphere, atmosphere and biosphere in the totality of a world ecosphere. The term has been burdened by ascriptions of almost mystic significance, but it can be used in a more modest way, to designate the domain of interplay of those distinctively human mental functions: abstract thought, symbolic representation, and imagination. Other, simpler mental operations—learning from experience, communicating with one's own kind, solving practical problems—occur among many animals and properly belong to the realm of the biosphere and the investigatory province of ethologists. The noosphere comprises, in contrast, cultural and spiritual traditions, art and science, philosophy and religion, and other such systems of symbolic thought, representation, and evaluation which are peculiar to humanity.

Compared to many of the intricately balanced systems of the biosphere, such as food chains and genetic coding, the systems of the noosphere seem almost rudimentary and unstable. But the noosphere nonetheless has profoundly influenced other systems: the very environmental crisis we now face reflects the noosphere's disruption of the stability of the biosphere and of the other great natural realms.

Is the noosphere, like the biosphere, subject to evolutionary adaptation? Can the human mind cope with environmental changes so as to enhance the prospects of man's survival within a stable biosphere? We cannot assume an affirmative answer to either question. Many species' specialized organs apparently have become maladaptive under transformed environmental circumstances and thus have contributed to extinction of the species. To assume *a priori* that our brain ensures evolutionary "privilege" on into an indeterminate future is to indulge a biological complacency that is as perilous as it is thoughtless.

Man's fate over the long evolutionary haul, as much as from day to day, will be determined by what happens in the human mind and in its collective product, the noosphere. Our best prospect as a species lies in the adaptability of our mental activities, not of our bodily processes. The hope of rapid adaptive change in the noosphere would give reason for optimism, for that is where our best talents lie. But what is "rapid?" Several centuries often intervene between the appearance of new ideas and a full response of cultural and intellectual reformation. Although improved communications seem to have greatly accelerated this process since the Renaissance, substantial agents of lag still prevail. The dissemination of new ideas, for instance, is often controlled by those who most resist ideational change. Further, the virtually unmanageable array of demands upon us results as much in perplexity and irresolution as it does in revision. Most ironically, the very flexibility of the human mind often leads us not to adaptive clarity and decision but rather into confusion, as we broadmindedly examine so many sides of a question that we find ourselves unable to sort out the resulting intellectual contradictions. We are in such a state now about "ecology," frustrated by our inability to choose at a time when critical choices must be made. We are bewildered even by the search for the intellectual wherewithal by which to make such choices. What out of our past is pertinent? What in our predicament is even within our means to change? The guidelines of sustained coherent thought, let alone decision, seem indecipherable. But it can be argued that the search has only recently come into its own, that only the outpouring of comment in the past decade has provided the chance to juxtapose enough perspectives to get a grasp of these questions and locate, if not articulate, their answers.

Neither prosecution nor defense are proper responsibilities of witnesses. It makes no more sense to condemn man for ruining his environment than to hate glaciation for extirpating species and modifying land forms. On the charitable assumption that man can alter his behavior better than glaciers can, we do think it worthwhile to examine the causes of environmental disruption by man and to look for creative alternatives. Accurate, unbiased testimony is the best we can hope for; we know how difficult it is to achieve even that. We are persuaded, however, that the best prospects for our future are to be found in our capacity to understand rather than to manipulate, to accept rather than to conquer, and to adapt ourselves to the world rather than the world to us. Even as mere witnesses to the world around us, we must find ways to be participants whose thoughts and actions are tolerably compatible with creation. □

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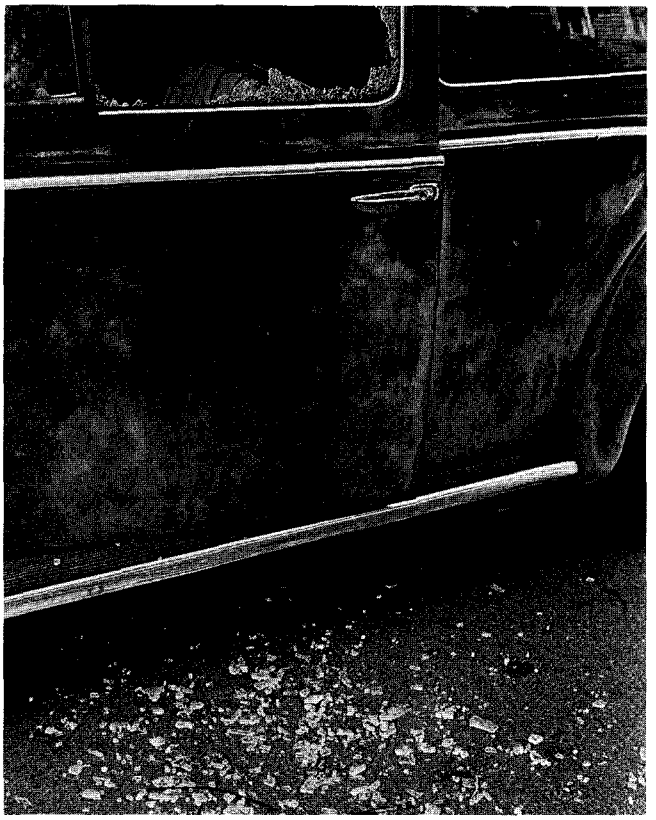

The Thirteenth Apostle

A STORY BY KAYWYNNE ADAMS

Meph lined his ten kids up along the kitchen wall and drew up his six feet four to six feet six, all stone and hard to penetrate as a curse.

"Couple of my friends say one of you isn't mine."

"I hope it's me." Stringbean Lenny Lou glared at him and he glared back. She waited for the razor strap to come down from behind the wash stand, but he just kept glaring at her. Then he wheeled out the back door and down the hill without stopping to dismiss the assembly.

Amethyst scraped the bread dough from her fingers and started out.

"I'll just get that quart of blackberries down the cellar and we'll fry supper now whether it's time or not."

Since they hadn't had any breakfast or dinner, they all wilted on the linoleum floor and laughed a little. He didn't come back, and they put out the bread with milk gravy and the berries and thanked the Lord. They all talked about the last school picnic when Shooey won two pounds of pork-chops in the sack race.

"Tell us about the people that had the funny table." Little Lea kept smelling her plate and thinking about a lick of salt.

"Well, they was the Loons back home. Had nothin' and Jack Loon got down this big tree and took a piece of the middle for a table and since they hadn't any plates or things, he just carved plates right in the table. They had twelve kids."

"How'd they wash after?"

"They just licked it good and got on up."

"You sure that's true?"

"I saw it. They was near neighbors."

"Oh, we've heard that about a thousand times." Reeve pushed his plate back and put his head down on the table.

"Tell us about your mammy losing her goose."

"No, not that. Reeve, you tell the one about the girl who wouldn't eat her bread unless it was under her arm awhile."

"That can't be true."

"True enough. Ora Rose Mosh. I've heard worse than that."

"Can't be."

"Worse." Reeve sat up. "Mr. Chippelanger picks his nose and pushes his boogers around on the table with a pencil."

"That's enough, Reevy."

"Tell about the man that had eighteen starving kids and only one shell in his shotgun."

"That was the man at Finger Back. He had one shell and it was Christmas Eve and he went out and sure enough saw ten turkeys on a limb."

"What kind of limb?"

"Oak?"

"No, it was elm."

"Makes no difference."

"You want to hear?"

They all got quiet.

"Well, then he aimed and fired and split the limb and all

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the turkeys' feet was stuck but good and the limb came down and fell on three jack rabbits and knocked him back into the pond and he came up with a dozen fish in his pockets."

"You believe that?"

"You believe Jesus and the loaves?"

They heard Flook barking out by the well and all got around on the floor by the cook stove. Amethyst sat in the rocker with her song book and started out with "The Engineer's Dying Child." When she got to *his duty called him from those he loved,* Meph opened the door. He took his coat off and sat down at the table. She ended that one and went right on to "The Letter Edged in Black" and by the time she got to *he rang the bell and whistled while he waited,* Meph had started to take out his boxes of junk and everybody relaxed.

He stretched his Abe Lincoln frame and began to go through things. He took out a bunch of old toothbrushes and got out pots and pans.

"Now you're really going to see something. These are going to be finger rings: emerald, sapphire, moonstone."

He never missed doing what he said. He had a way. And, sure enough, he shaped the melted and hardening stuff into beautiful rings.

"I can sell these a dollar each."

They all knew he could. But they'd never see the money. He'd stop on the way home and buy a marvelous machine that didn't run and never would run.

People coming up toward the Smit wood over the shaky bridge could never believe their eyes. It started out with a few Billy goats licking away down at the bottom of the hill, but no ordinary place for goats. Meph's goats had a regular fancy garden around their pen in the summer, and fully-decorated, live Christmas trees in winter. He said goats responded better to color. He could talk to goats just like he could talk to snakes. When Meph met a snake in the road and said *stop,* the snake did, and when Meph said *go,* the snake did, and when Meph said *stand,* it tried its best, and when Meph said *go North,* it did for sure. Most people had seen this with their own eyes, so they couldn't say it wasn't true. When you were with Meph, a snake always just came up the road.

Meph's place was a summer place. He had flower beds in shapes of stars, diamonds, triangles, circles, and half moons. Something to do with the Zodiac. The flower beds were outlined with old wine bottles turned upside down so that the bright green or blue bottoms shot back every flower's color to the sun. He was partial to Iris, but grew things like Hardy Aster, Creeping Charlie, Amaryllis, Begonia, Canna, Dahlia, and Tiger Lily in colors nobody ever heard of. And the hill leading up to the wood was covered with living spices: Roman Wormwood, Rosemary, Rue, Sage, Southernwood, Tarragon, Thyme, Borage and Clary, Fennel and Horehound, Hyssop and Lavender. Wherever there was a space between growing things he built a child's dream: a flying Jenny with Pegasus seats painted silver and gold, a sliding board covered with Classical Chinese in blue and red enamel, a little goldfish pond with a canopied bridge, swings of hand-carved wood, doves on the wing, hawks and war planes.

In every tree were dozens of glass wind chimes on which he had painted fragments of astronomical charts so that the slightest wind stirred an orchestra of fairy harps, arcana of sound that hypnotized the birds. Into the bark of every tree in Smit's wood he had carved elaborate signs of the Zodiac, all facing to the North.

The house was a monstrosity of shapes and colors. Meph had started out with a piece of tin leaning on a gum stump and gradually worked up to a great shack constructed of every conceivable material. No room was the same. Some were subterranean, some were reached by rope ladders, but they were all filled with loads of old furniture, trunks full of costume jewelry, broken pottery, glassware, sheet metal, wires, tools, broken machinery, stuffed animals and birds, hundreds of framed photographs, tombstones on which engraving mistakes had been made, thousands of cigar boxes full of pins, buttons, ribbons, tacks, nails, bottlecaps, tin foil, needles, dried leaves, seeds, decomposing butterflies and beetles, rocks, matchboxes, mousetraps, piano rolls, eye glasses, bird feathers, pieces of broken glass, labels, tickets, cardboard boxes filled with chicken and fish bones, and even a human skull. He was especially fond of surgical equipment and had the works of a hospital operating room and dental laboratory plus a complete tonsorial parlor.

The back yard was full of junk: a city bus without wheels, four tractors without motors, various farm machinery, a covered wagon, twenty or thirty rusting stoves and sewing machines, wheels, tires, crossties, pieces of rail, spittoons, pianos, old phonographs and twenty framed reproductions of Washington crossing the Delaware.

One whole side of the yard was filled with Meph's mosaics, assortments of seeds pasted on cardboard to form geometric patterns, butterflies and flowers pressed under glass, great dolls' houses complete with hand-carved furniture, seascapes enameled on odd doors.

The wishing well by the bus hid an underground still. The big black circus tent up on the middle of the wood was for seances.

It was morning before Meph finished ten rings and stopped for a cup of sassafras tea. Everybody was getting up, but Meph was out before they got to the kitchen.

Late in the afternoon it began to snow. Little Lea was looking down the hill and saw the big black thing moving up toward the house. When it stopped at the front, she knew right away it was a funeral car. She watched Meph get out.

Amethyst looked at it for awhile, saying nothing.

"Is that ours?"

"Ours."

"We have to ride in it dead?" Little Lea went over for a closer look.

"Going to be the school bus when I get folding chairs to put in back."

"You buy it with rings?"

"No. It's the Party's. Show everybody in this town too cheap to get a high school bus. Kids sick walking ten miles a day."

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"They won't ride in a Communist bus."

"Wait and see."

"Charge?"

"Twenty-five cents a month."

"Party get it?"

"Naturally."

At first people just laughed at Meph's bus and most wouldn't ride, but after a week of getting passed up, all the kids sat behind him and felt glad enough. Then the town got all up in the air, and the day after that Meph's axle broke coming down Church Hill.

The coal lady pulled up in her truck and looked the situation over.

"Goddammit." Meph kicked the casket door hard.

"Say that right in front of the Methodist Church, Meph?"

"Hell, yes. If that grey-haired bastard's in there, let him come on out and strike me dead."

Eventually, Meph found a way to put wagon wheels on the back of the hearse, but that took several weeks and he had time to think his life over and decide about a new job. It had to be dignified. He'd been about everything, but being occupational therapist at the state asylum was what he'd liked best. Crazy people were the only sane ones left. Not many people knew that.

He'd read enough about medicine to be a doctor, and he'd collected enough equipment. As a matter of fact, he should have known that fate intended for him to be a doctor. Anyway, it wasn't a matter of medicine. If he made a mistake, he could fix it with his mind and that's what made it no risk at all. Besides, most of the people he knew had no other choice. So it got around that Meph Ransom was a faith healer and by spring he had enough business that they could eat again. Not that people paid cash, but he did a lot out on the farms, and they gave him what they had. He lightened the chassis of the hearse after the motor went out and then he bought a mule. That was slow going, but he managed to get around. He painted the angel of death on one side of the vehicle and that had some effect on people who were then afraid not to try Meph at least once. In three weeks he had delivered four babies, set a broken leg, and cured a variety of small ills. He used what mixtures he made himself, but it was the mind that made health. He knew that if he placed his right hand on the backs of patients' heads, something like a blue heat would drain from his fingers and into the body. He spent nights reading up on surgery.

"You're messing with death and life like that and making everybody believe you even if they got good sense. It's the devil."

"And you eat what the devil provides."

"You think it's all yourself. Lord just takes one look at you and says it ain't possible and rescues those poor people."

"All how you look at it."

In April little Lea fell sick with pneumonia.

"You're not touching her." Amethyst stood by the bed with an iron skillet in one hand. "Take one step and I'll kill you."

After a few hours, she gave in, and they all sat by Lea, listening to the wind and rain outside blowing up the ancient chill.

Meph made a steam tent and lay inside with Lea.

"You all say the Lord's Prayer." Amethyst got down on her knees. The wind got louder and they heard the night train whistle.

"You have to ask that bastard?"

"Our Father."

"You get *him* in on it and she'll die sure as hell."

"What you want. Hell beggin'?"

"That's here. Here's hell. Heaven's nothing to do with us, otherwise we'd be living in a great big house, all properly educated and eating out of china plates and having black coffee out of toy cups."

Lea died before morning. Meph got the undertaker at the county seat to trade a casket for a goat and he buried her in the top of somebody else's grave. The way Meph fixed the sod, nobody could tell it had ever been touched.

For a week he stayed up in the black tent with Mrs. Dragovitch. Every so often the children saw the old woman come out to look at the sky. Finally they came down and Amethyst made strong tea.

"She wouldn't talk up there. It has to be here. She's still in the house."

Mrs. Dragovitch leaned on the table and pulled her black shawl close around her eyes.

"Let the table knock three times if the spirit is here."

It knocked.

"Let the table rise once if the spirit will communicate."

It rose.

Soon there were knocking and cracking noises inside the wall and a bolt of lightning shot up out of the floor. Meph put his hands up to his eyes in pain.

"I'm blind." He screamed it over and over until Mrs. Dragovitch got him quiet by touching his temples.

She went away later in the morning. They watched her black dress down through the blooming purple and white Iris. The sun burst into fragments on Meph's bottles.

"You know this is Good Friday?"

"That means it storms this afternoon."

"Not necessarily."

"It always does."

"He can't see anymore."

"I know."

Reeve took his father for a walk in the flowers. Meph got down by them and felt for the bottles.

All the children were in the big city bus looking at Meph's books, so Reeve and Meph went over and got in. Meph climbed into the driver's seat.

"Well, where'll we go?"

Violets grew all around where the wheels should have been.

"Byzantium." Meph pressed his foot on the gas pedal. The wind chimes heralded departure. They noticed bits of green in the big oak's Capricorn. His mind opened on the great road that forked three ways too soon for him to decide. He shifted to reverse.

"Who wants out at Easter say so now."

Nobody said.

"We're going on then." □

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CAROLYN MAISEL

TWO POEMS

THEY RETURN HOME AT MIDNIGHT

A brooch

flares broad as frost leaf
on the kitchen window

a flat sheet in mindless
opacity she

leans on the sink
hair like black

frost a face too hard
in repose like a worked metal

pin over two soft breasts.
His hair spreads bright as

leaves in winter sun the black
dress stripped low to the small

boney lump between her breasts
covered by light or gilt leaves

or a mouth worked in winter
leaves the frost blades exhausted

over her body opaque as a window
dissolving in winter he touches.

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CAROLYN MAISEL

HABITS OF AIR

They said you were on
Thorazine, a thousand
milligrams per day and other
drugs, supportive, blue

and orange and white and
yellow, dancing through your
blood, a rainbow of sanity
completing its twenty second

cycle, chasing itself through
the abrupt, branching vaults
of your mind. They told me
you were never alone except

then. How were you so
determined?
Did you count?
One-hundred thousand

Two-hundred thousand
Was it like flying?
Like leaving the wing
with no understandable

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fear of falling
into a world so
distant, too far away.
Did you feel an intense,

exciting fear that
launched you into a new
medium, liquifying air.
Was it like flying?
Did you float, when the chute
jerked open, gently
into the sky.
I am afraid. I am afraid

there was no drug
for your pain.
I am afraid it was not
like that

for you,
but like night and space
wrapped tight
around a claustrophobe.

I am afraid it was like
really dying
hanged from the foot
of a hospital bed.

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JONATHAN HOLDEN

TAKING ROCKY'S FATHER TO THE HOSPITAL

I first saw him in the sudden light
in his pajamas, trying to comprehend us
through drizzled eyes, a good 250 pounds
of athlete, tyrant, king and cocksman
gone to seed—this grizzled, bearded
guy who, for all the times they told him
to his face, refused to hear that
he was going to die.

"Father, you're going to the hospital."
Rocky framed each word with the same
too-loud, too-careful and too-bland
phrasing you'd use to get through
to some simpleton. That's how you speak
to a man through his brain tumor.
The old guy muttered something ornery.

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We gave him our shoulders, inched him
toward the door. He knew what was coming
off enough to hate our help, and in the doorway
balked, mumbled something his daughter
instantly understood, she grabbed this cup,
pulled his penis out and put it in
until the trickle stopped, and we started
forward again. Somehow we got him in the car.

I had forgotten this is what hospitals
are for. It was busy as a bus terminal
but cleaner. We wheeled him along the waxed
hall up one wing to the small, bright room
where he would wait until his bus came in;
stood around while the night nurse hung
his robe. She kept up this bright chatter
as she helped him into bed, when I saw
for the first time the back of his head,
all soft and bubbly where they'd first cut in.
The old guy started whimpering about being lonely
tonight. The nurse chattered on, pretending
she didn't know exactly what he meant.

We didn't mention it on the way to the car.
I found myself looking at the floor,
because I felt it too, and I couldn't stand
making my eyes meet Rocky's face anymore
for seeing all the hatred which as yet
he didn't know was there.

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JONATHAN KATZ

THE LAWN

The strong gusts blew the long,
white drapes like ghosts over our heads.
Though she has no face yet, my future
wife was running up the lawn's long grass
waving her arms and my father
set his jaw and scowled as he
dialed my number. You and I
were naked, rolling on the rough
living room carpeting, slamming into
the wall, spilling ashtrays onto
our flung clothes, rolling over butts
and buckles, biting, sucking, pulling,
curtain rods and drapes were falling,
sunlight poured into the room, the
phone was ringing, hands were flailing at and pounding
on the door, we were rolling over books
and letters, cackling, grunting, chanting
La La La to wordless tunes but loud
I think because you were to leave
in the late afternoon and our eyes had only lately met
also, it had been for each of us so long . . . .
When all the knocking had stopped,
after our whispering and your quiet humming,
and you had gone for good,
I stepped across the dangling telephone cord
to the window, my future wife's footprints
in bent and broken dandelions indelible on the lawn,
and I thought how the wind would carry
a lasting dampness, but when I would next get around
to cutting the lawn, the sharp, green smell would rise magnificent.

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THE FABULIST

Clarence Alva Powell

Legends

1.

No rain, the Chief said, since the day I died.

His subjects fell down before him, chanting, beating their breasts.

That was many moons ago, he said. When Unnam was slain in the moat and we were driven from our homes.

There was deep silence for a long time. The dead were mourned. The bones were moved from place to place. Sacred burial grounds were abandoned and new ones were found. Their lives were passing like sand through the fingers. No place was secure. There was no place that could be called the hunting ground. There was no place where the spirits could go.

I say, the Chief repeated. There has been no rain since the day I died.

2.

You, the voice said. Walk safely through the passages of time because I am here.

The trees listened, the grass-blades and the stones listened.

The eagle did not hear the voice but knew, and the coyote knew. All the friends of the passing ages knew.

The highest mountain, the widest prairie, the deepest canyon, the wildest river, and all the sands of the desert knew.

The voice said, What you may find is ours and there is no place that we did not touch. The insubstance of which you were and will be, this we are and have been, leaving no place for you.

The clouds know this, the moon, the sun. They have been with us a long time.

3.

The inscription said, How may be measured the space between When and When, and how determine in time which moment is Now. Were you there, and if you were, how do you know the hour, the minute, the small mark that says Here.

The inscription said, Here, There, Where and no arrow points the way.

If there is no mark, which is What or When, and if the mark is not yet there, When, and if the mark may yet be left in some point of time to come, how many have been here before you.

4.

We are the people. We are here before the division of names and tongues. This land is our land. We are the dust of this land, deep on deep upon which you walk and while you may not hear us, we cry out with each foot-fall.

We cry out with each change of the land. The rivers, the streams, the lakes, these are our tears. Each tree, each flower, each blade of grass grows from our heart, and the colors of the flowers are the colors of our blood, our eyes, our skin and our spirits.

The sound of the forest is our chant, the waves our plaint, and the thunder our anger, spoken through the mouth of the great one.

5.

The names of the great Chiefs are many. They were not Chiefs. They were martyrs. They were not even martyrs though brave and noble died too. They fought, lost and died because they fought for a lost cause.

They were the mourners at the funeral. □

CLARENCE ALVA POWELL is prolific, widely published in literary and mystery magazines, and lives in Detroit.

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A Story by Leonard Price

The Market Trip

Slack wind gathers itself again and flops in the bowl of the valley. The snow wavers like a curtain, continues to fall. I am coming down from my house on the hillside this afternoon with perfect neutrality about the snow. If it makes the driving difficult, it wears the very corporeality off this loveless huddling of land—and that is something. Charlotte is in bed with a fever, so there are no groceries in the house. Now I must get them before the stores close. It is chore and not chore, both diversion and acknowledgement of boredom. What I do this afternoon, what I re-fashion in the flux of possibilities, may have such values as I assign but all arbitrary and therefore neutral.

The road in snow-softened undulation bears me on. Another traveler approaches—he burns his lights for safety. My ears hear the whoosh of his passing; my eyes absorb the plane of the road. Africa, why did man ever leave your green veld for this glacier-land? Cynicism engulfs me like a tiresome old friend. Go away, please. I've given you such a share in my life.

A cluster of buildings comes sailing on the hills. Brown, white, square-patterned shapes sprout around me. Here the matronly sedans founder in parking places and pick-up trucks leap lawlessly from nowhere. Snow images scurry about on unguessable errands. Minutes behind me Charlotte is groaning in the hothouse of her fever. Incongruous. Yet blessed is the amusement of incongruity, for we have so little else. And, why, a swinging sign smites me almost to laughter:

THE OLD QUAINT MARKET

But now I remember. I've been here before, and I'll go here now. I'm not entirely bereft of motives—there is a woman, I remember.

Quaint? Well, this floor is wooden and adrift with dust. Bulbs dangle between laden and precarious walls. Here all manner of sustenance crowds out for my viewing, on shelves and boxes and mountainous counter.

There are no other customers inside, but a male voice is still ringing away to silence. It is the owner. He smacks his palms on his apron, rubs them. His wife has turned away from him with terror and suffering wrought on her face and she comes toward me, though I doubt her legs will support her this far.

"May I help you, sir?"

She seems to feel her husband glaring at her back. I sense the shaking silence between them.

"You can, yes. I have a list . . . ." But I don't have a list. I feel unhurriedly through my pockets. That paper with Charlotte's impatient scribble—dropped in the snow somewhere. What groceries do *I* want, then?

"Bread," I say in my clearest voice, as if invoking the divine. "One loaf of white, one rye."

The woman looks around confusedly. Her husband is quicker—he snatches the loaves and shoves them mutely into her arms. Without raising her eyes she carries them to the counter. I follow her there, and I catch her dark eyes in my own. Remember me, wild creature of the hinterland? I do remember her face. She does not separate her gaze, and dumb wretchedness bathes my face like wind.

"Anything else?" The owner has his hands on his hips. It's closing time and he wants me out.

"Hamburger, corn, beans, spaghetti," I say without blinking.

He grinds one heel on the floor and shoots a glance at his wife. "Get it, Jane. Take care of it."

I instruct her specifically and she begins to collect the groceries. The husband watches her. I take my time and think of more things I want. Finally he utters a hiss of disgust and disappears into the back of the store.

The woman is holding something before me. Her voice is soft and tremulous. "The large can or the small can?"

"The large." I wince inwardly at her uncouth accent. She is over thirty, her face is sad and long. Yet unaccountably I find the tremor of lost beauty there in a face that should hold no more than the tedium of life in the squalid hills, and luminosity in eyes that should be trodden blank by domination. And her eyes dark as dusk appeal to me—or am I vulnerable to illusion even now?

She is an automaton of fear, with that emotion and all others held barely in restraint. Her husband is out of sight, but his anger still roils in her heart, in the back of her eyes. She engages me with the intricate message of her face and eyes, though I am a stranger out of the falling

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LEONARD PRICE is a native of Louisville, Kentucky, where he still lives. He is a Dartmouth graduate "sailing the solitary seas of free-lance writing" and an amateur actor.

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dark, farther from her than the horizon's hills. Her hands will not stop their trembling, and her eyes, once caught, are wholly mine.

If I could not, I would not trifle with her pain. I wanted a tricksy game of glances, no more. But this shabby daughter of hopelessness wounds me with her wordless appeal—so, binding and bound, I let my tongue name foodstuffs like beatitudes. Her feet are quick and dutiful, and on her face is always the motionless tracery of distress. She stops and waits before me, again, again.

I strain to think. "And a can of tuna-fish."

It is on a high shelf. She climbs on a stool to reach. Her hand twitches upward in the gloom and blunders. The stacked cans slip and tumble. Crashing, they fall from the shelf in a torrent through her arms and over her shoulders to bang and bounce furiously on the floor.

The husband explodes out of the back with a roar. "Damn you! Damn you! Stupid! You've done it again!" His fingers pinch white on her arm and she wilts in an agony of shame. "Pick them up!" comes the hiss from his black visage. Bloated with rage, he whirls away to the back, and she is left grabbing at the rolling cans.

Here am I out of the snowwind, a phantom of flesh, miserable beside her. What was her name?

"Jane," I whisper. "Don't touch them. Let me do it, Jane."

Her face flashes amazement and terror, and her eyes grow wet and red. Lowering my face, I swiftly gather the cans and stack them again on the high shelf. She follows my movements in wonder, then darts away blindly to total my sale. Pausing, she flings a strange gaze at me. "Anything . . ?"

I cast about. "Yes. A couple of those apples. Two apples."

While she adds figures and packs groceries, I stand where I am, staring into the darkness at the back of the store where the husband prowls about.

Now I turn, I pay her, avoiding her gaze. As I step into the snow with my bundles I hear the husband emerging from his lair.

The snow is still falling. The hills ascend in darkness. I drive home with my lights on. Most strange and not entirely welcome—Charlotte is on her feet again, ready even to fix supper. I slowly unpack the groceries. Here are the apples. Here are one, two . . . here are three, four, here are five apples!—tucked away neatly among the packages. What does this mean? And here is something . . . handwriting on the back of the receipt . . .

Your a fine man

I turn away into the purple darkness of the dining room. There is no space in my head for me. I touch my face to the window. *Your a fine man.* I am not. God, I am not. The snow and the mute hills are killing me. She calls me across the waste of land and heart, she calls me to return. But I am not a fine man.

The snow blows and settles. I am standing here in the darkness, unwilling to come to supper. □

STEPHEN DUNN

SMALL TOWN: SONNET

The boats that do not pass my house
take their toll.
I used to hear them, in the quiet fields.
Where are those parrots and their bawdy songs?

There's no place to go anymore in a mirage.
When a fact is a fact
I know something's wrong.
A fog horn no longer blows when there's fog.

When it rains, I take long walks.
But a bottle never washes by
filled with notes. It's two years now
since a dream woke me up.

There's no suitcase that can solve all this.
There are boats here, sunken, which must rise.

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ALBERT GOLDBARTH

A TOUR OF THE MIDWEST

1.

Corn
leaves accepting
the full corn leaf
shaped segment
of sun radiating
on, and in;
absorbed.
Corn
kernels halved,
in each small wedge
we saw miniature
bursts of yellow
sun rising
over seed and starch
escarpments.

2.

The night, alive with levels. The moon, the vacuum, the atmosphere, skin. Levels, subsidiary levels, levels kinked with fenestrations: the convoluted shoreline and the lake, their conceptual and physical interpenetration, their separateness: water, and sand. Levels: the sky, and the trachea; the passage of sky into the throat; the passage of the throat through sky; the swells and rills and deep wells of breathing. Levels, and inner area, and volume, and layers, and surface. The stars: burning too far to char or warm the possessions of our evening; stars: following, or establishing, patterns whorled on my thumb.

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3.

The people age, and the skin dries parchment. I have seen graveyards extend like blank paper. I have seen pages rise into the night, pale and rectangular, from a thousand black typewriters, like gravestones; verses were written upon them. Lichens, I have seen lichens and moss, I have seen moss growing deep-sea green and sea-moist, overhanging the ledge of an E on an epitaph cut in marble. Katydids, ladybugs, orchids, and aphids, and asters I have seen, the *thrive, the sheen, the tribe on moss in the morning.*

4.

The door. Slamming
through circles, the quick whizz
of electrons churns its negative force
fields around the protons in fields of corn,
oats, beans, and barley. The land
and the houses repelling, attracting.
The corn, the oats; and the grain
in the porch door tousled like hair
over the centuries, atoms in flow.
When I think of the wind lifting you
blonde above the season's crop
I could never call even Flat Patch,
Iowa, dull again!

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THREE STORIES

C. JEREMY SHAW

Mind Stealing

If they thought that they could deprive her of her mind (*if they* thought that!), yes, she would gather all the power of her cells, all the atoms and orbits and particles of particles, and with a giant and final effort she would blow up the whole world in a multi-megaton mushroom.

She wouldn't be able to do that without a great deal of research or a great summons: Please come, God; I need you.

Could she ask God for a favor? God who had not saved his own martyrs (the good ones and the bad), who had not written nor approved his own hymns, his own wars, murders, tortures . . . would God answer the summons of an unknown woman who wanted control over her own atomic bonds?

"What if he really believes in himself?"

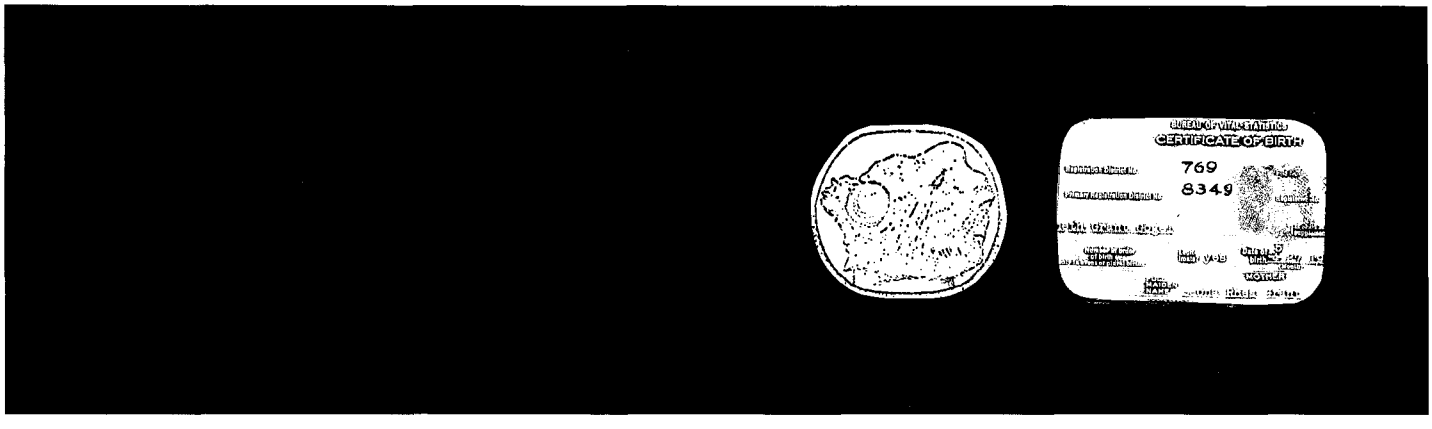
Perhaps they had already deprived her of her mind. Equations were difficult: If God didn't believe in God he certainly couldn't help her ask him for anything. He wouldn't even be able to help himself.

"God only helps those who help themselves."

"Yes, mother."

("Help yourself to another helping, darling."

"Thank you, mother.")



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Prayer: Dear God, enclosed is . . . dear God, my God, please help me! I wish to be able to keep my mind; there are those who wish to take it away from me. Therefore I request the power and/or the knowledge necessary to send away, forever, those who want to take my mind. Is that too much to ask for (a) and/or (b) do *you* have the power and glory necessary for the job at hand?

Answer: Dear Person, either God is all knowing, all powerful and all glorious or God is not at all.

Prayer: Dear God, you didn't answer my question.

She didn't wait for another reply, this time. She didn't answer the answer the next time. She gathered it all into her cell, with herself, to rot.

Were there warnings to be found in these universal messages? Not that she, herself, in all her own power wouldn't give ample warning to her fellow man. "I'm going to kill myself," she said, seriously.

"You are not," they answered. They took away her belt, her shoe laces and her bra. Droop.

"The day will come," she said to them when they weren't listening, "when I place a pencil under my breast and it stays there. That day you will pay."

She said, " . . . a pencil please."

"What do you want a pencil for?" they asked.

"For pointing."

They carefully bluntened a yellow pencil and presented it to her. She began to cover her cell walls with equations. The mind stealers thought these harmless enough.

In three years of concentrated effort she worked on the walls, designing the inner structures of her atoms—and their atoms and their atoms—all the way down to the ultimate of all atoms, the last one.

Insight into atomsight.

One day she handed the pencil back to her guards.

"Is it all pointed out?" they asked.

"Either we are all knowing, all powerful and all glorious," she replied, "or we are not at all." She turned her back on them, then, to hide the droop in her breasts.

"Perhaps we should give her her bra back," they said.

She meditated one whole day, refusing all food and all support, and then at noon the next day she organized a maximum shift in the orbital velocity of a particle of the ultimate, intimate atom and blew herself up, her jail, her country, the world and the UNIVERSE, bang. □

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Madonna

Where does He live on his off days? Is He continuously moving around, leaving no trail, looking for new subjects? Does He speak from pulpits, disguised as a man of God? Itinerant in mind? Does He live quietly in one particular town, in a small apartment; working only on those people near him, dispensing exact doses one generation at a time? A horizontal cross-sectional physician?

Does He perform abortions at popular prices and flout the established law?

Or does He (is it HE?) turn into a black bird only on Sundays when He leaves the world to Holy people, one day a week? Six are sufficient for his needs.

Sufficient for his million words . . .

If she were to talk along with . . . if she were to crowd out his laden words, like those people forever talking all at the same time, then His power would be lessened. She could gain for herself, being louder, faster, having more periods and question marks because He talked, naturally, in nothing stronger than semi colons—only very occasionally would he call up a full colon and never, never a period or an exclamation mark. But He would set her up for those: Calm, soft voiced, unemotional He would provoke her into grabbing at periods, exclamation marks, asterisks—leaving

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her with them hanging from her ears, painfully, piercing while He, Himself, wandered away on a comfortable slide of dashes and commas. How easy! One great big exclamation mark after another, fat, greedy ones. She chased them around the street lamps where they were disoriented butterflies, released from their coccoons, intoxicated by light points, light waves. Natural punctuation to the cosmic portfolio. Drone. Drone.

As He said: "If you take out, discriminate against certain sounds—perhaps every second consonant or all harsh endings—you make music. You compose. Or just listen to the lines between . . .

And so, one day, when she was off her guard, He impregnated her with a Bell Note.

* * *

"I still think . . ."

"There's nothing to think," He said, spreading his wings. "Accept it. Don't worry about it. There may be something in it for you, for all you know. Immortality is not to be lightly esteemed. This may lead to your salvation."

"I think you're making a mistake."

But He had gone.

* * *

Birth: She started, one evening, by cleaning out her mind. She probed through some entanglements, labeling parts to be discarded and parts to be hung on to—parts to be penciled on to blank pages and held up to the light for reference. Using a broom and a dust-pan, sometimes a knife or a pair of scissors, she sat at an empty table (covered by a white cloth) and let her mind run out in visual, punctual lines which patterned the table top. "Let it all flow . . ." She released the containers. She willed the circuits to open up, to flow out from the cells, to display. Lines, dots, curves, angles-tangles (like the hair in a horse's tail these required the scissors and were heaped on the floor). Orderly equilateral figures were retained, carefully; they would be the basis for regrowth. The more orderly of the others too were comfortable enough to be piled up like children's books.

At first quietly, carefully the flow began: One thread, like a tentacle, wavered in front of her eyes and reached tentatively for the table top. She watched. She held her breath. It felt around for the right place to begin and attached its end firmly in one corner, almost at the edge. Like a snake in ecstasy it then laid itself, gathering momentum, in quick haphazard circles around the original point making an attempt to contain the whole white expanse by describing a perimeter close to the squared edge of the field, missing one corner and dropping over the edge, gathering up quickly with some extra twists and turns to fly rapidly, in expected lines, angles, regular and irregular shapes, faster and faster, tangles, dots, circles, faces, tails, arms, Greek figures, water flow dammed and undammed, algebraic flood, tide, moon . . . She held her head tightly as the thread in her mind unwound through the tight hole in her forehead, cutting her as its speed increased, a sharp tight pain as the spools spun, ramming around inside—emptier, emptier, more painful—as the table blackened, disfiguring itself and its shapes into one great mass of unwound mind, chaos, disorder, pile upon pile of debris (Cleopatra's hair thrown into a pile on the deck of her Nile boat).

The first great peal. The cathedral bell. □

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Citizen

In the lawyer's office: Rhyme or rhythm?

Over the fence George Washington leapt,
Under the tree, maid Josephine slept . . .

Rape! There began the war: "White soldier, black soldier, please don't rape my child."

The child was growing (once, Josephine swore she recognized the outline of a poked foot), and might have access to her thoughts. Loud noises did provoke movement, yes. Listening and learning?

Advertisement: *Citizens of our Great Nation, it is now possible to teach your child the Declaration of Independence while still in the womb! This is a first for our Great Country! Instill in your child an understanding of the Nature of our Republic so that he may be prepared, from the moment of birth, to consider seriously his Great Heritage! Available, also, for a small increase in price, the Gettysburg Address and the Boy Scout Code! Let your child be the first on his block to emerge a Full Fledged Citizen! Amaze your neighbors! Save our Country!*

"I would prefer, sir, the Charter of the United Nations, if you have it."

"That is unpatriotic, Josephine."

"How about *Alice in Wonderland* then?"

"Was that written by an American?"

"Well . . . no."

"That is still unpatriotic, Josephine. Dangerously so. We could, perhaps, work in a chapter from the New Testament. Would that suit you?"

"But that's Jewish. I know you wouldn't allow that. You're trying to trick me."

"No, Josephine. The Bible's different."

"How?"

"You should know that."

"Yes, of course."

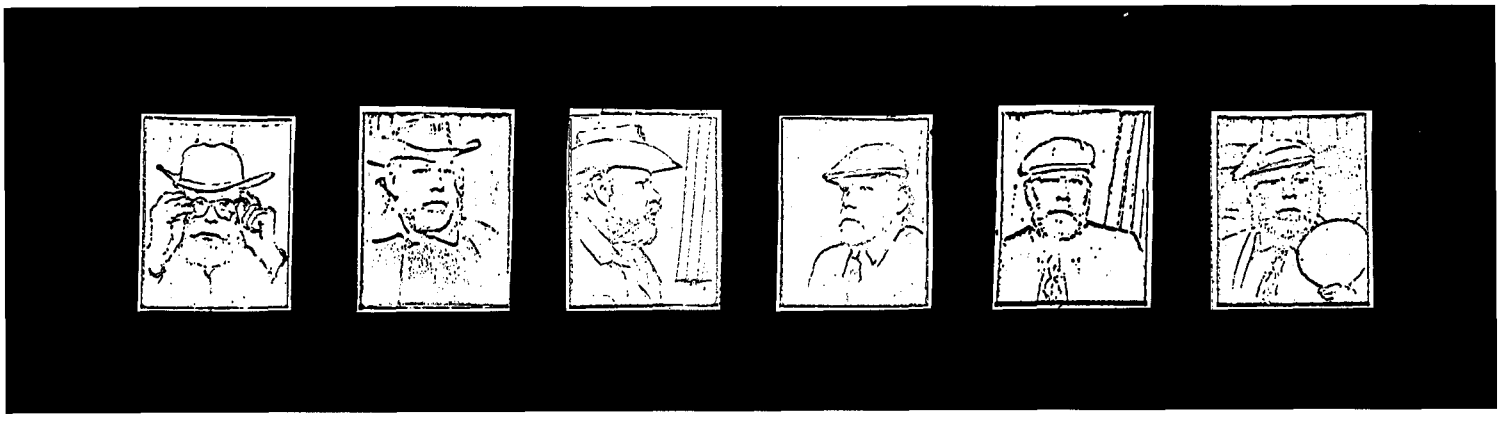
When the lawyer had called, that afternoon, to tell her that Gordon had been arrested and charged with raping a fifteen year old white girl, Josephine hadn't believed him.

"It'll clear itself up, Josephine. These things do."

"Yes, of course."

"The girl probably couldn't see her attacker very well," he had said. "Perhaps we can show that."

Now he was saying that the girl was positive in her identification. "Our case may depend on discrediting her.



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I don't like to do that unless it will be worse not to. We'll have to see. There is her father to contend with, too."

The father would win. "Perhaps the father did it himself."

If she, Josephine, told them that Gordon slept with *her*, regularly? Would that help? Or would it make things worse for him, even undermine him? She could show them she was pregnant. With Gordon's child? "Your Honor, why would this man force himself on a fifteen year old when he can sleep with me whenever he wants to? It is an insult, to me, even to suggest such a thing. In fact, you are insulting my child-to-be. Have you ever rolled in the grass with this man? How can you judge him?"

"I can judge as I please," he answers.

"It is more complicated than you think," says the prosecutor, asking for the first witness.

Josephine sees her mother, entering.

"Mother, he's very nice. He's very good in bed. You should sleep with him, too."

The mother faces the court: "Your Honor, I accuse my daughter of having slept with a Negro. Of having enjoyed it, too."

("Mother, you're a witness. You're not supposed to accuse me of anything.")

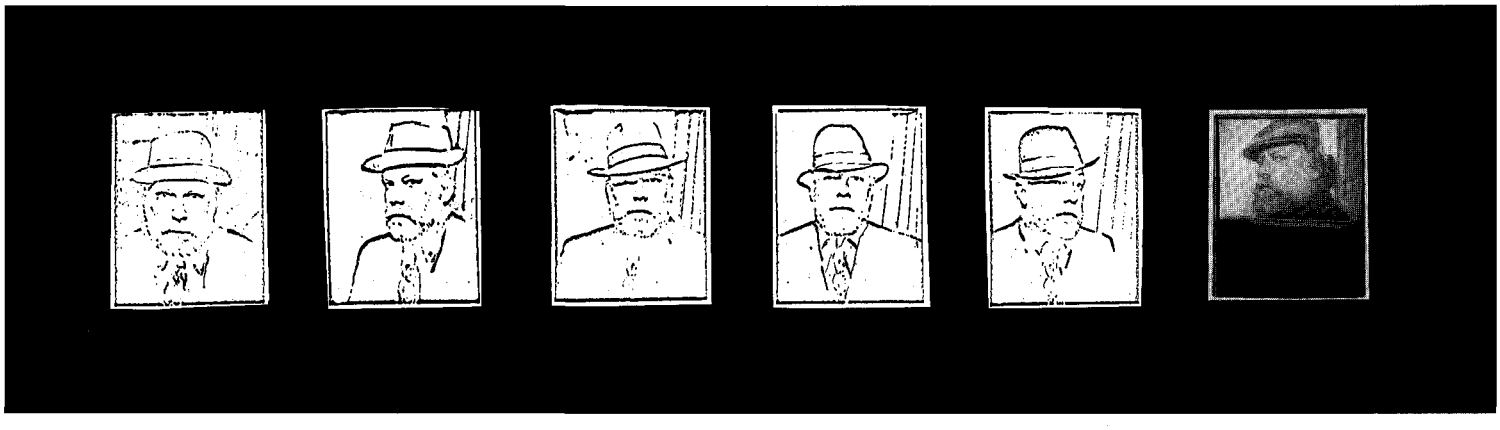
The jury is full of neighbors. They turn their faces towards the mother and daughter and lift shaky fingers, pointing at them: "We, your Honor, accuse that woman of having a daughter who has slept with a Negro. Of having enjoyed it, too."

Josephine is sitting alone, dressed in white. "I plead guilty," she says.

"Burn them! Burn them!" shout the jurors.

The judge rises, the courtroom darkens. He picks up a large book and says, "It has been the policy of this court in the past and is the policy of this court now to tolerate no intolerance. You will be quiet."

Gordon is brought in, through a small door at the dark end of the room, by two women dressed in brown paper bags. He is designated, by the court recorder: Exhibit No. 1 for the Prosecution. Watching him, the jurors quiet one another. They leer. Josephine stands quietly and smiles at Gordon who smiles back. Gordon, standing straight and still, is undressed by the two women who caress him as each piece of clothing comes off, unbuttoned, unzipped, some parts shredded or worn falling off by themselves. A cat in



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an empty corner washes itself. There is no noise. When Gordon is naked, still straight and proud, the jurors cannot contain themselves; they scramble at him like horses at a grain trough (flashing tails, kicking, dancing), all over him at once, legs, arms, mouths, wrinkles, umbrella spokes, sticks and stones. Josephine stands still across the room. Gordon cannot be seen below the waist where there is a mass of teeth, elbows, feet and knees . . .

After the orgasm, the jurors crawl back to their benches and the judge bangs his gavel. "Silence," he calls. As all is quiet again except for a residue of panting, he says, "Will the jury please announce its verdict."

"If it please the court, we find the defendant guilty as charged."

After consulting his notes the judge asks Josephine to sit down. There is no chair, she turns towards him. He says, "The defendant, Josephine, is found guilty and is hereby sentenced to . . ." He smiles over the jury, who cackle back at him, "a caesarian performed without anesthesia."

They all leave. Josephine, alone, remains. The cat complains in his corner.

"We must wait," the lawyer was saying, "to find out how strong their case really is." ("As though," Gordon said, later, "if I really were innocent, I wouldn't be convicted.")

What she wanted to say, now, she wouldn't: "It all falls into patterns. I think it will come to all of us now, one by one." The lawyer wouldn't be interested. She tried silence, thoughts: "Yes, yes, yes, everything is . . . we'll just wait for it to end, and it will. The opening door will be a rebirth. A caesarian rebirth? Full of the pain and fear of exposure?"

Caesarian? "I had this dream," she was saying to the lawyer. She said *dream* because she wouldn't admit to fantasy. "My experience operates on levels which I, myself, am unable to distinguish." It was easier to deny her own confusion, to prevent the listener's confusion, by naming all experience "dream"—future, past and present.

"What was it?"

"It was about Gordon and me . . ."

No, wasn't it private? For instance, if the child (her child-to-be) *were* Gordon's and there were objections: "You must never tell anyone, Josephine. Just one person and it will be all over town. What would we do then?" Josephine would reply, "Yes, Mother."

"How could you?" Tears . . .

"I did, Mother."

"Why—WHY?"

"Are you jealous, Mother?"

She need not, perhaps (should not), reveal herself to the lawyer. "Well," she said. "It wasn't really a dream. It was a revelation, about Caesar and caesarians."

"Yes."

"It was that Caesar was not born, after all, by caesarian."

"Yes."

"He was born in the normal manner, even if it was painful, in the Coliseum before all Romans of consequence: 'Awake, child, we await the sign!' " Josephine swirled around, her Roman robe flowing in the wind; she was addressing thousands, bloodthirsty thousands . . . "You see? A white horse is being led in. He is snorting at the scent of blood. There! They're leading out the new born Caesar on his back. The mother is lying in the arena, still."

She smiled. "That became the legend," she said.

White horse. Black horse. Geese! It was the white geese that gave the warning, that saved the city. The black goose remained silent.

"It was about caesarians and geese," she said.

"The law does its best." The lawyer was now addressing Josephine as though she, too, were a child and would need protection. "It is designed to protect other fifteen year olds, as well as punish the attacker of one."

"Gordon didn't do it."

"Josephine, we're . . ."

"Yes, of course."

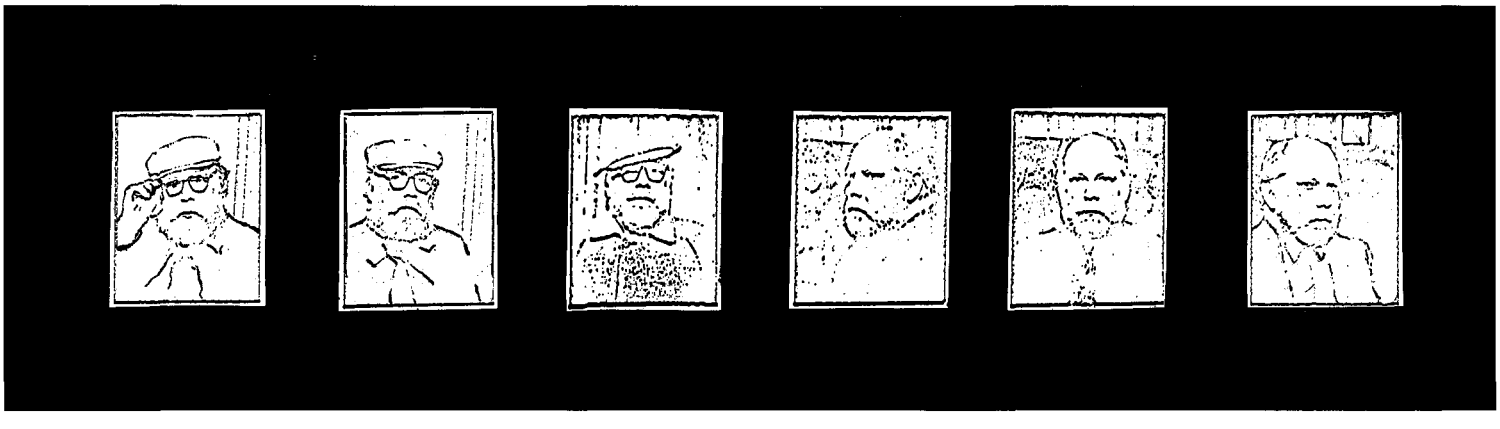
She would wait a few minutes and then declare her intention: "If I were to walk, late at night, in the area where the girl was raped . . ."

"No, Josephine. No."

"I could dress as a child—hide my pregnancy."

No. Yes. No. Yes. "I'll go, then, some night without telling you."

"I won't be frightened," she would say . . . as she enters the jungle. She walks through the shadows, cautiously, into a clearing where the enemy has suspended, in a southern Vietnamese Shade tree's shade, four captured rapists. They have been mutilated, to unstring their mothers' minds. Torturously invulnerable. Entering, breaking into the circle, there come blank eyes. "Cut them



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down," orders the officer. "*Cut them down*!" Four men move, reaching into the branches, feeling for the ropes, quickly to slice the twist out of their experience. "Cover them." Seen from the outside, the children's camera is now directed to war news (edited, before home consumption, because of the sexual aspect: "This one is for the files."), switching from face to face, brief glimpses, fingers tight on the camera controls—click, click—no voices. Josephine gathers her coat closely about her, defensively, to hide—reveal—her youth and vulnerability. This is the flag to provoke the usurper. She won't look back. There's no danger. No, there *is* danger; that is where she is, courting it. "Come, come," she whispers. "Look what I offer."

Perhaps she could learn not to care. Free herself?

Later, when she visited Gordon, he said, "You know, Josephine, they sentence people to death for rape." Perhaps, she thought then, it was in forming these words, in gathering courage to say them, that he was trying to learn not to care. Repeating, again and again, "Death for rape. Death for rape."

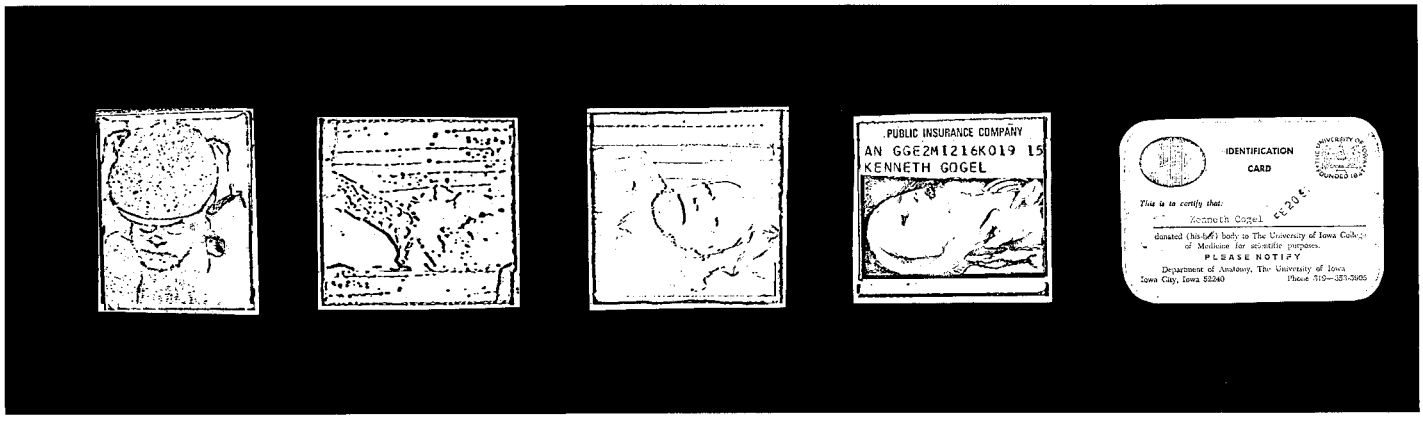
She tries writing, over and over, "Death for rape. DEATH FOR RAPE." She fills two pages of her notebook, looking for the moment when the words will take over and make the thought, itself, meaningless. Three pages. Nothing happens.

What if she were to let the thought carry itself, further? Where? A scaffold in a town square—a medieval square. Standing, blindfolded, on the platform: Gordon? Death for rape! She, Josephine, sees herself pushing towards him through the hungry crowd carrying the baby. She is carrying the child to him, there, on the scaffold. The child is wrapped in red, womb colored, to be returned. "This is yours, Gordon," she says. "You must see him before you die. You must remember him forever because he is you. Here, touch him. Bless him. Kiss him. You are giving him your life. Let it flow through your fingers, soul to soul. Tell him, now, that you feel him. You are him. Tell him the people watching, here, are his people. They witness. They cry. They sing songs about it all. They touch him, too. You and he, Gordon, are the same . . ."

In the lawyer's office: Rhyme or rhythm?

Under the fence maid Josephine slept,
Over the tree George Washington leapt . . . □

C. JEREMY SHAW describes his biography as "difficult," adding: "Last winter I taught English and biology in Vermont and Mexico. This winter I am camping in the Florida Keys with Virginia Woolf (my Siamese cat) for, possibly, no reason at all."



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In upcoming numbers of the NAR:

Stories —
T. Coraghessan Boyle
John Hermann
Alyce Ingram
John Jurkowitz
Nolan Porterfield
Ira Sadoff
Gerald Schoenewolf
D. L. W. Smith

Poems —
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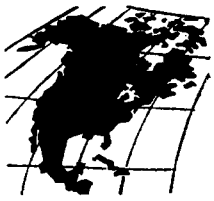

Paul Theroux

A Love-Scene after Work:
Writing in the Tropics

One of the most pathetic illustrations in all literature about the difficulty of holding a job and writing a novel at the same time occurs in Anthony Trollope's *Autobiography*. He has been sent to Scotland "to revise the Glasgow Post Office", and in order to assess the labors of the letter carriers he must trudge alongside them all day as they deliver. He is determined to do a good job; when a letter carrier goes to the top floor of a house, Trollope follows. It is midsummer and hot. "The men would grumble," Trollope says, "and then I would think how it would be with them if they had to go home afterwards and write a love-scene."

Any person who has tried to work and write understands that remark. Trollope knew a further difficulty: writing in the tropics. *The West Indies and the Spanish Main* was written in Trinidad, Jamaica, Costa Rica and Cuba, on board ship, in stuffy hotel rooms, in terrible heat. And he was working in the West Indies—surveying the postal service. Trollope was an unusual man, a great whist player, an avid horseman, a curious and observant traveler, a devoted civil servant (framer of postal treaties, inventor of the pillar box). He was a prolific novelist and a hard-working editor. Trollope's energy is a rare thing, and so is his candor: "But the love-scenes written in Glasgow, all belonging to *The Bertrams,* are not good."

A job, especially one that requires alertness, always menaces the novel. A job overseas is different; there are many advantages in being an expatriate worker, but there are more disadvantages, and after working abroad for nine years as a teacher in the seasonless monotony of three tropical countries I have decided to chuck the whole business and never take a job again. I have to admit that some of my objections are petty. I am made unreasonably angry when one of my unsmiling superiors, summoning me through his secretary, bites on his pipe, and—mispronouncing my name—demands that I must do this or that. I suppose the rudeness angers me; it is the Singaporean's least endearing quality. But it is a Chinese rule. The most powerful are the least polite; a promotion means a diminution in civility, which is a quality—not a virtue—of the very low.

"Excuse me, sir," says a student. "Eddie Fang says you are a novelist. Are you going to write a novel about Singapore?"

"No thanks," I reply. "But you've lived here your whole life—why don't you write one?"

"Can't." He flinches and adds: "There's nothing to write about."

There have been excellent English schools in Singapore for a hundred years. Singapore claims to have the best school system in Asia. English is the official language. No Singaporean has ever written a novel in English. Once there was a girl here who wrote poetry, but she went to Iowa and never came back. The highlight of the UNESCO-sponsored Festival of Books in Singapore was a children's fancy-dress contest; Raffles, Cinderella, Robin Hood, and Lord Krishna were winners.

"Well, if there's nothing to write about, then how am *I* supposed to write a novel about Singapore?"

"Eddie Fang said you used to live in Africa. And you wrote some books about Africa. So I thought—"

Sometimes during a conversation like this (I am asked the question twice a week) I say, "I'm writing a novel about a writer in Singapore who wants to write a novel about Singapore and can't." No one laughs at that.

No one laughs at much. The Singapore government, which is a dictatorship—inspiring the uncertainty and fearfulness of childhood, when authority always seems irrefragable in its strength—exhorts her citizens to be busy. The Singaporeans' play looks like work; people made into children are fearful about breaking rules, and very tense they become very humorless. They don't want to be caught laughing—anyway, what's so funny? Humor is the sort of independent mimicry that requires the same rebelliousness writing does. Humor also emphasizes differences in people, in their speech and habits; it has a tendency to distort gleefully in order to express a truth. At Morning Coffee, which is a tropical ritual observed as thoroughly as Afternoon Tea in a

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PAUL THEROUX has been visiting at the University of Virginia this semester, will move to England shortly. A new novel, set in Singapore and entitled Saint Jack, *is to be published in the summer. Mr. Theroux is the best (non-professional) mimic we have ever met.*

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temperate climate, I tell a joke. The several Chinese at the table fall silent, although the joke is quite harmless. If it was about physical deformity or race they might laugh. Then one says, "That's very interesting," and looks grave. My Indian friend giggles; like me, he's an expatriate. He offers a joke of his own. The Chinese stare at him.

A few days later the Indian asks me if I plan to stay in Singapore. I tell him I intend to leave, to quit teaching entirely and take up writing full time.

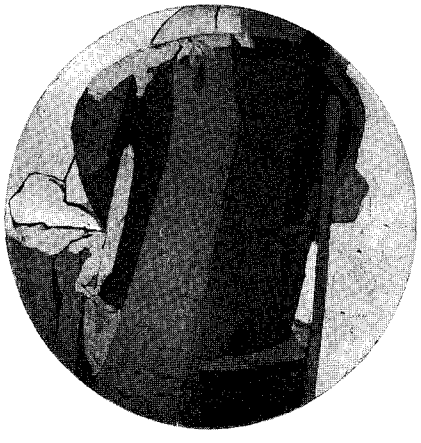
"So you vant to be another Faith Baldvin?" he says, and titters into his coffee cup. But he is not mocking. He reads Oliver Goldsmith for pleasure.

Conrad said (in "A Glance at Two Books", *Last Essays*): ". . . a book is a deed . . . the writing of it is an enterprise as much as the conquest of a colony." This means a daily effort of laborious concentration. It cannot be haphazard, weekend flurries of composition, and who can get up as early in the morning as Trollope? By stages one encloses oneself in one's novel, erects a barrier that shuts out the real world to duplicate it. Obviously, if one is married and has a job and children and friends, one can't write one's book as if one is serving a prison sentence, going into isolation and emerging when the work is done. On the other hand, one doesn't write a book by observing a landscape or hearing a phrase at a party and then going home and scribbling the observation in the margin of the text. "Are you writing a book about Singapore?" the student asks. I'm not; if I do, it will be elsewhere.

Mornings in the tropics—an hour or two—are for teaching, afternoons for sleeping; the lighted pause of early evening is spent in a bar or drinking on a verandah. Writing at night is out because of the heat, and the desk lamp attracts insects that make shadows as they strafe the pages. But also, teaching in the tropics is undemanding, hours are fewer, classes smaller, and I've given all my lectures before. I can dig out last year's lecture on *The White Devil* or Middleton's comedies and with a little planning I can free myself during the best hours of the day, the glittering spring-like morning, from seven to ten or eleven. I write in longhand so I can memorize everything I've written; committing a novel to memory makes it possible to think about it, extend it, and correct it in any idle hour.

I consider myself to have been very lucky. Both in Uganda and Singapore my bosses were writers themselves; they were interested in my work, and I think they made some allowances for me. Mr. Moore used to ask me how my poems were coming along, and Mr. Enright and I used to commiserate in the Staff Club; he would look around at the drinkers, when we were talking about writing, and say, "They think it's easy!"

The best job for a writer, a job with the fewest hours, is in the tropics. But books are hard to write in the tropics. It is not only the heat; it is the lack of privacy, the open windows,



the noise. Tropical cities are deafening. In Lagos and Accra and Kampala two people walking down a city street will find they are shouting to each other to be heard over the sound of traffic and the howls of residents and radios. V. S. Naipaul is the only writer I know of who has mentioned the abrading of the nerves by tropical noise (the chapter on Trinidad in *The Middle Passage*). Shouting is the Singaporean's expression of friendliness; the Chinese shout is like a bark, sharp enough to make you jump. And if you are unfortunate enough to live near a Chinese cemetery—only foreigners live near cemeteries, the Chinese consider it unlucky to occupy those houses—you will hear them mourning with firecrackers, scattering cherrybombs over the gravestones.

Sit in a room in Singapore and try to write. Every sound is an interruption, and your mind blurs each time a motorcycle or a plane or a funeral passes. If you live near a main road, as I do, there will be three funerals a day (Chinese funerals are truckloads of gong-orchestras and brass bands playing familiar songs like "It's a Long Way to Tipperary"). The day the Bengali gardener mows the grass is a day wasted. Hawkers cycle or drive by and each stops; you learn their individual yells, the bean-curd man with his transistor and sidecar, the fish-ball man on his bike, the ice-cream seller with his town crier's bell (a mid-afternoon interruption), the breadman in his Austin van, leaning on the horn; the elderly Chinese lady crouching in her *sam foo* and crying "*Yeggs*!" through the door, the Tamil newsboy, a toddy alcoholic, muttering "Bay-bah, baybah". Before the British forces left there was a fish-and-chip van; it didn't beep, but there were yells. The Singaporean doesn't stir from his house. He waits in the coolness of his parlor for the deliverers to arrive. The yells and gongs, at first far off, then closer, console him. It is four-thirty, and here comes the coconut-seller ringing his bicycle bell. He has a monkey, a macacque the size of a four-year-old, on the crossbar. The coconut-seller is crazy; the buyers make him linger and they laugh at him. A crowd gathers to jeer him; he chases some children and then goes away. After dark the grocery truck parks in front of your house; the grocer has a basket of fish, a slaughtered pig, and the whole range of Ma-Ling canned goods (Tripe in Duck Grease, Chicken Feet, Lychees in Syrup) and for an hour you will hear the yelp and gargle of bartering. You have written nothing.

The heat and light; you asked for those in coming so far, but it is hotter, though less bright than you imagined—Singapore is usually cloudy, averaging only six hours of sunshine a day. That persistent banging and screeching is an annoyance that makes you hotter still. You are squinting at the pen which is slipping out of your

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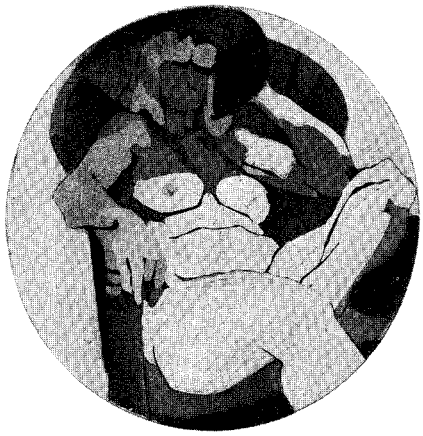
slick fingers and wondering why you bothered to come.

Slowly, it happens, a phrase, a sentence, a paragraph. Nothing comes out right the first time, and you are not so much writing as learning a language, inching along in what seems at times like another tongue. A characteristic of writing in the tropics is this recopying, rewriting, beginning again, and understanding that it will take a long time, whatever you write: it has taken me a week to get this far with this little essay. It is not impossible to finish, just hard, because many things have to be in your favor: it can't be too hot, it must be quiet, two or three hours have to be totally free of interruption; your health must be good and your mood fairly bright—a late night, an argument or a hangover means a lost day.

But the fact of being in a foreign place has made you small. You are not a public figure (public figures who are habitually vocal are deported), simply an English teacher. The bookstores do not stock your novels, or anyone's. No one is going to ask you to lecture at the National Library on "The Future of the Novel"; the worst that can happen, if it is known you are a writer, is that you'll be asked to edit the church newsletter. You are unaware of any sense of celebrity or reputation. That happened last year, in another country, when your novel appeared; and there hasn't been a murmur since. Everything has to be proven anew, and if you need mollifying, look at the bookshelf behind you where your novels, even last year's, have become mildewed and discolored in the humidity: they could be the books of a dead man. No one where you live has the slightest idea of what you are doing. To write you have withdrawn, like any conscientious hobbyist; and ceasing to live in the place you may be lonelier: your world is your house, your family, your desk; abroad is a bar.

It is a form of eccentricity, but in the tropics the eccentric is common, and far from being held in contempt, he is regarded as rather special and left alone. At Makerere University in Uganda, one head of department was never seen. He didn't teach his classes; he was never sober; he was said to be a great character. He had many defenders. There was a professor of philosophy in Singapore who used to saunter down the street in his pajamas, reading difficult books. This was his uniqueness. He was watched but never pestered. Expatriates by the very fact of their having come to the tropics are considered by the locals to be somewhat crazed, and the expatriate who fails to be a person in any subtle sense can still, with a little effort, succeed as "a character". This requires a specific obsession, a singular tic of personality. Your distinguishing mark might be your continual absence ("Oh, *him*—he's *never* around"), and if not doing your job is your affectation, then you may proceed with other things. What does it matter if anyone sees this as dereliction? You are an expatriate on contract, not an exile;



you intend to go home eventually. Gain a modest reputation for being unreliable and you will never be asked to do a thing. The students will get used to receiving their essays late.

The students demand less than American ones; the system, Oxbridge in equatorial decline, forces them to work alone. They are as insular as their parents and subservient to the government; their civic-mindedness takes the form of fashion shows for charity. They are intelligent, nervous, inexperienced and poorly read. Many would like to emigrate to Australia (Singaporeans talk reverently about Australia, the way people from Massachusetts used to talk about California: "Plenty of opportunities there, and a really nice climate"). Like students in developing countries everywhere their speech is a mixture of the bookish and the political ("whilst we go from strength to strength," "Timorous Claudio is part and parcel . . ."). Some in essays sound like Jacobeans. One discovers Irving Ribner and tears him to shreds; another who has never heard of the First World War writes about Wilfred Owen. There is no American literature. "Miniver Cheevy" is said to be an old English ballad, and Herman Woo and Heidi Chin think the eponymous hero's name "ridiculous and comic". Except for the archaic phrases the students write clearly, in mission school copperplate; they speak less well, and in a tutorial sometimes spell out the word they want to say. Lady Macbeth is "roofless" or "rootless", and Dickens is very good at "crating a crackter". It is easy to laugh at such lapses, until one reminds oneself of the emigré scientists in the States—brilliant men in their fields—pronouncing their original sentences all wrong. Chinese students are plagued by glottal stops and certain consonants, and they always speak very fast. In a tutorial a girl holding a leatherbound book reads aloud to prove a point she has just made:

> *"Must dow esplain da ting I hate most on erf,*
> *Da treason, da shame, da assident of my berf?"*

In a lecture on *Tamburlaine* I repeat the line, "Holla, ye pampered jades of Asia!" They smile earnestly in recognition. What will become of them? It is a foreigner's question. Their parents have saluted four different flags, some more; in twenty-five years, when these students are middle-aged, what flag will be flying over the Singapore City Hall? It is futile to speculate, but not less worrying for the person who has spent three years among them, who knows many as friends and who has come to understand that the student who says, "Must dow esplain . . ." is no fool.

I never travelled much in the United States, but I remember my two older brothers making a train journey from Boston to Ohio when I was

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D. Free distribution by mail, carrier or other means:		
1. Samples, complimentary, and other free copies	68	81
2. Copies distributed to news agents, but not sold	568	137
E. Total distribution (sum of C and D)	3377	3400
F. Office use, left-over, unaccounted, spoiled after printing	285	200
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I certify that the statements made by me above are correct and complete.

(signature) **Robley Wilson, Jr., Editor**

seven or eight—in the late Forties. Somehow we had the idea that people in Ohio suffered from a lack of iodine because of the scarcity of fish. The Ohioans were afflicted by goiters, and people walked around Cleveland with bulbous growths on their necks. I was too young to go to Ohio, but I remember my brothers' stories: about their meal on the train, how the waiter brought their change back on a plate (a *plate*!), the flatness of Ohio, and they *had* seen some people with goiters, and one elderly lady called my brothers "Yankees". They had their rolls of film developed; the results were blurred and banal, every one was a disappointment: Ohio, which sounded so foreign, looked like Massachusetts.

Growing up, I mistrusted anyone who had not travelled. I thought of becoming a White Father, not out of any piety but from a desire to be sent to Africa. I thought of becoming a doctor: then I would have a useful occupation overseas. When I was nineteen or twenty I applied for a job in a Lebanese university, and having fabricated much of the application, was called for an interview in a Boston hotel. The interviewer was kind, asked me my age, then smiled and said I wouldn't do: Beirut was a rough city, and "there is always some kind of trouble in the Arab quarter". I finally left in the spring of 1963, and I have not been back in the States for more than a few weeks at a time, a total of about four months in nine years. Now I want to go back for good, not because it is too difficult to live abroad—only writing is hard in the tropics—but perhaps because it is too easy. Africa, for all its mystery and strangeness, unquote, is really a very simple place to live. Africans are candid and hospitable, and make it easy for you to live among them. The Chinese in Singapore appear not to see you; the students do not greet you or each other. Anonymity is simple.

Living among strangers in a foreign place I am like an unexpected guest waiting in a tropical parlor. My mind is especially alert to differences of smell and sound, the shape of objects, and I am apprehensive about what is going to happen next. I sit with my knees together in the heat, observing the surfaces of things. At the same time, the place is so different I can indulge myself in long unbroken reflections, for the moments of observation are still enough to allow the mind to travel in two directions: recording mentally the highly-colored things one sees is simple; the mind then wanders. The reflection may be a reminiscence of early youth, a piecing-together of an episode out of the distant past; it is not contradicted or interrupted by anything near. In a foreign country I can live in two zones of time, the immediate and apprehensible, and in that vaguer zone I thought I had forgotten. Since I do not write autobiographically, I am able to see the past more clearly; I haven't altered it in fiction. That detail of the goiters in Ohio, the forsythia bush behind our Medford house, our large family; slowly, in a foreign place, the memory whirrs and gives back the past. It is momentarily a reassurance, the delay of any daydream, but juxtaposed with the vivid present it is an acute reminder of my estrangement.

And it may be wasteful and near senility, this reaching back that living abroad allows. Certainly trivial details can be strongly visualized: twenty-five years ago I pulled myself up the side of my grandfather's rainbarrel and looked in and saw mosquito larvae twitching near the surface like tiny seahorses. I had not thought of it until yesterday, in a suburb of Singapore. I wonder at its importance.

Most of a writer's life is spent in pure idleness, not writing a thing. Up to now I have used this idleness to poke in places with bewitching names, Sicily, the Congo, Malaya, Burma, Singapore, Java; this distraction could be a form of indulgence, but I can't think what else I should have done. I know it is a mistake to stay away from home too long, and it is foolish if one calls oneself a writer to go on teaching. The professions are separate; I admire the people who can write love-scenes after work. I can't, and it is unprofitable to pose as if I can. I told a colleague I was leaving. She was concerned. She believes my subjects are little countries. She said, "But if you live in Europe or America, what will you write about?"

We'll see. □

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THEATRE JOURNAL

Gerald Weales

Moby Dick in Rome

Moby Dick is one of the most sophisticated novels ever written. That may be why no dramatic adaptation, on stage or screen, has ever seriously approached the complexity of the original. I discovered the most recent attempt in the Abaco, a minuscule theater-club on the Lungotevere Mellini in Rome. There, in an oblong box of a basement room, Mario Ricci's Il Gruppe Sperimentazione Teatrale were doing the director's version of Ahab's pursuit of the white whale, an almost wordless mixed-media spectacle that came no closer to Melville than any of its predecessors had. Came not so close, in fact, for Ricci was obviously less interested in adapting the novel to the stage than he was in using its central dramatic and psychological truth—Ahab's obsession with the whale—as the frame on which to hang a production, part ritual, part cartoon, of which the virtues were not at all Melvillean. His image for Ahab's determination and inevitable failure was the character's repeated attempts to build a cardhouse; Ahab began the construction with an almost supercilious sense of his own power, putting each card in place with the air of a professional who knows that it is only a matter of time, and then when, on cue, the cardhouse collapsed, he registered momentary disbelief, scooped up the fallen cards and began again.

Although this view of Ahab recurred all through the play, almost like a refrain, we were well into the production before it was first introduced. The play began in a darkened theater with the sound of waves and, then, the bump-step, bump-step, bump-step that could only be Ahab pacing the deck. A dim light picked up a figure moving nervously about the stage. When we finally got a good look at the actor playing Ahab, we saw that his right leg was encased in a wooden box, as though it were wrapped for mailing—Ahab's artificial leg reduced to an obvious prop, a device that controlled the rhythm and the sound of the man who wore it.

By that time, however, it was clear that this was going to be a *Moby Dick* with no nod toward realism. The fish had already been on and done their first turn. Four actors, dressed in black, wearing fish masks, undulated slowly around the stage, their heads lifting and turning in the murky light, converting the scene into an underwater world, curiously self-contained except for an occasional frightening cry (Ahab in chase, I assume) that invaded the depths. However fishlike the movements, there was human purpose in the action; the four actors were creating the *Pequod* out of rods and sails and man-sized puppets. This was not simply a case of making a theatrical virtue of necessity, of turning stagehands into performers. Ricci may have intended that the scene suggest the necessary end of Ahab's quest, but he was plainly more interested in the business itself. Each of the fish went through exactly the same steps so that we perceived an activity not once but four times, presumably on the assumption that the carefully balanced, laboriously performed tasks added up to an aesthetic experience. Choreography as ritual.

When the last fish had oozed off stage, the lights came up and there was the *Pequod*, a puppet sailor at the ready by each of the four masts. There, too, was Ahab and his cardhouse. The four performers (two women, two men), having shucked their fish outfits, returned as sailors, each taking his place by his inanimate counterpart. The puppets were painted with the faces of the real actors and with clothes that suggested, without quite copying, the costumes the performers wore. This device had a number of uses. It could people the stage with a sizable crew. It could free the real actors to do their theatrical chores while the fake ones stood their ground. It could let the actors play reality-illusion games, moving with and manipulating the puppets, alternately showing a real and a fake self. When the production turned to film, there were occasions when the four who had become eight became sixteen. Variations within variations.

The first shipboard scene, played to romantically sentimental music, showed the *Pequod* at sea. The actors unfurled the sails, providing irregular bits of screen for the projections. As the performers rocked back and forth, creating the roll of the ship, the moving sails distorted the fragments of the movie they managed to pick up. The film, which showed Ahab and his crew on a real ship, had a home-movie look about it which suggested that the actors, the director, the whole crew (in the theatrical, not the maritime sense) were out for larks. Having created so playful a scene, Ricci sent in Moby Dick himself to dampen the high spirits. And what a whale! He appeared first as a black-and-white drawing seen head-on, but the head began to move, to dislodge itself from the set wall that held it, and out he came, a great white variation of the Chinese New Year dragon.

Before the first big *Pequod*-Moby Dick fight, we were given a series of vignettes. In the cutout where the whale's head had been, Ahab, looking for all the world like a figure from a nineteenth-century valentine, took up

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a series of poses—telescope in hand, bottle to lips, against a tropic, then an arctic background—which showed us how committed he was in his search for the whale. The clash, when it came, once again a mixture of film and live action, left Ahab beaten but unbowed, still determined to get his whale. At about this time, I confess, a certain amount of confusion set in. The sailors redesigned the ship, moving Ahab and his cardhouse to the front of the stage, to a prow newly constructed of four ladder-like props. There, after a collapse of the house, two of the fish reappeared and played a hand of cards with Ahab, all three actors moving as though underwater; and there, too, the paper-dragon whale swallowed Ahab—that is, covered him with its accordion-pleated body. A certain finality might be presumed to attach itself to either of these images, but they turned out to be prophetic rather than terminal.

The fish returned, moving at their accustomed pace, and this time they brought with them an immense sheet of heavy paper. With great concentration, they began to fold it, crease it, work it, as though they were making a gigantic paper hat. One would have had to be fairly dense not to guess what they were actually making, but, even so, it was amusing when they reached the last fold and shook out a paper longboat big enough to hold Ahab. He was no sooner in it than Moby Dick hove into view, no longer the Chinese dragon, now simply a mouthful of teeth, the ladders of the prow converted to a new use. The mouth closed on the boat and the play came to an end.

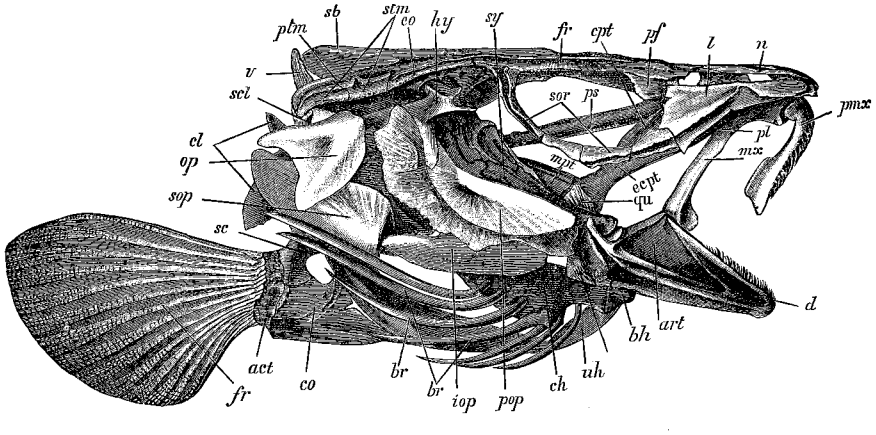
I may have done the play a disservice by describing it completely in terms of visual images. There was a text, spoken by an offstage voice, but it was used infrequently, and—perhaps because I am not really comfortable in Italian—it became, for me, simply another sound, one with the noise of the waves, the thud of Ahab's wooden leg, the slap of the heavy cards on the table, the sea chanteys sung in English, the sound-tracky music. Mario Ricci's *Moby Dick* was primarily a play to be seen, not heard.

The description above has, I hope, conveyed some of the pleasure that the production brought me. Let me put my reservations on record as well. First, there is the matter of Melville. Since an adaptation that reduced *Moby Dick* to a plot line suitable for *Classic Comics* and then mocked the reduction could hardly be expected to enrich the original in any way, it might be fair to wonder why Ricci bothered with the novel at all, why he did not simply turn his imagination loose and create something completely his own. I can think of two reasons. For one thing, Melville fascinates the Italians; writers as distinguished as Eugenio Montale, Salvatore Quasimodo, and Cesare Pavese have translated or adapted the American writer, and the composer Giorgio Ghedini became so Melville-struck that he did an opera version of *Billy Budd* (with Quasimodo's libretto) and a concerto based on *Moby Dick*. Presumably, then, an audience—even Ricci's predominately young one—might be enough at home with *Moby Dick* to pick up the Melville allusions in a work that had a totally different purpose. Which brings me to my second guess. The tragic and the ironic implications of Ahab's obsession are well taken care of by Melville, but it is possible that Ricci wanted to suggest that that kind of destructive single-mindedness has its comic side as well. In that case, Ricci is not so much adapting *Moby Dick* as using the book for his own purposes.

My other caveat about the production is more basic to Ricci's theatrical style. Mixed with my fascination at the inventiveness of the production was an incipient impatience and boredom. Even though the play was a short one (an hour-and-a-half at most), every scene was overextended. Having hit upon a concept which he could embody in physical action—the fish routine, for instance—Ricci had his performers do it and do it and do it, slowly, repeatedly, exhaustingly. I do not mean to suggest that there was anything aggressive about the repetition. I assume that Ricci intended it to be fascinating in itself, a kinesthetic experience of sorts which, like well-conceived dance or mime, might pull in the viewer, involve him in a ritual process. The problem here, however, was that although the tasks were well performed, they were not intrinsically interesting, and once I had grasped the idea implicit in them, the repetition became a burden for me.

Since I saw the show one January night in 1972, Ricci's Ahab has chased Moby Dick across Europe; those fish have oozed from one theatrical capital to another, finally washing ashore at the Edinburgh Festival. Even though both Melville and my patience were assaulted at the Abaco, I am pleased that the Ricci production is reaching an audience much larger than it could draw in its own tiny theater. Too many small experimental groups in whatever country display more inspiration than skill. In contrast, Ricci's company was a genuine *ensemble;* the costumes—and not simply the attractive fish masks—were carefully designed contributions to the total feel of the production; and the multiple-purpose devices used the small stage as a challenge, not an excuse. Now, for Ricci's sake and for ours, it might be valuable to have his *Moby Dick* turn up in this country, face Melville on his home ground. □

FIG. 190.



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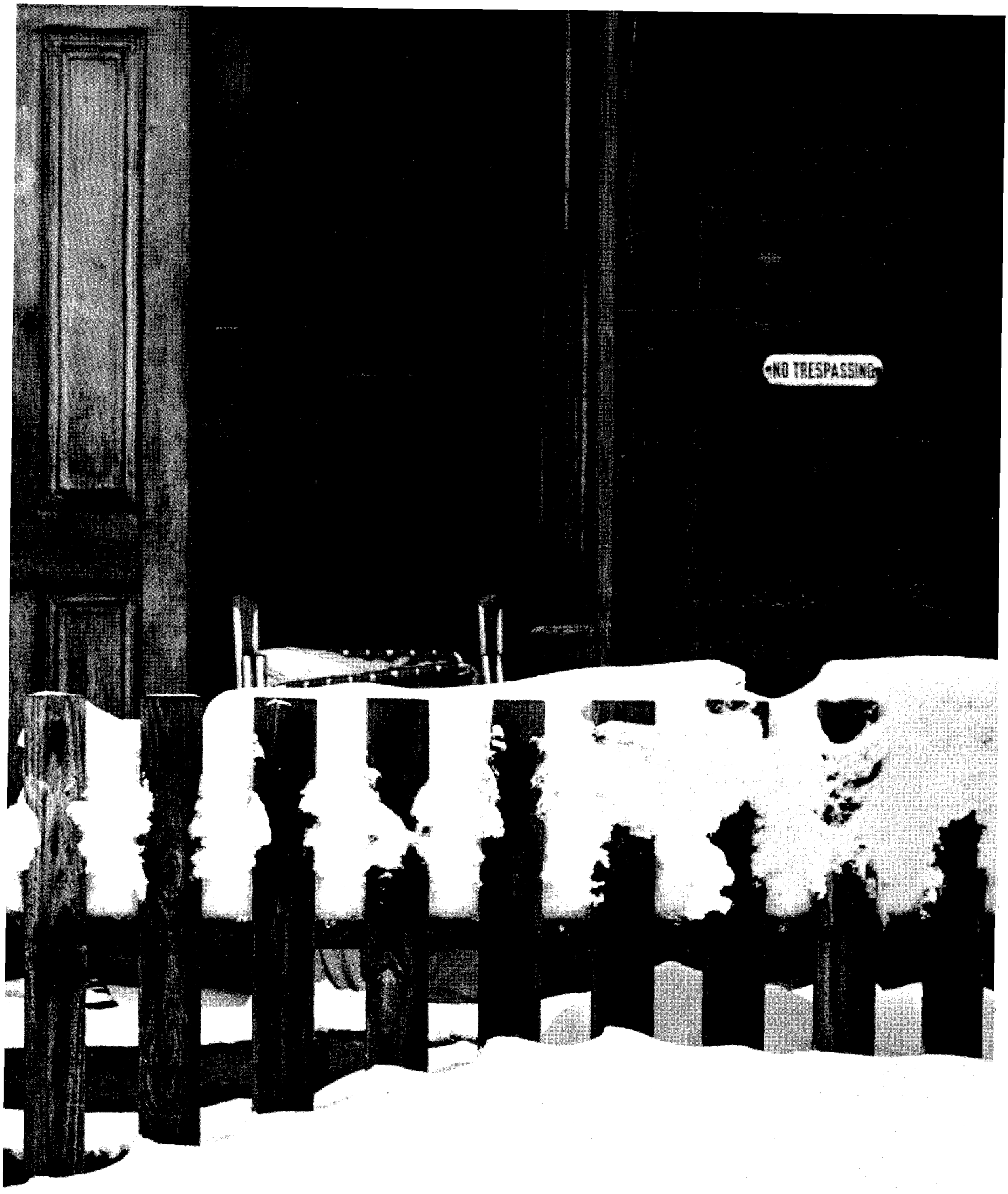

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